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ABSTRACT

This report of the findings of a year-long policy analysis of New York City's three public branch library systems, carried out by the Nova Institute in cooperation with a study committee composed of city and library officials, opens with a brief historic account of the development of the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Queens Borough Public Library systems, followed by a comparative analysis of these libraries with established library standards. The principal purpose of the study was to examine a number of key issues affecting the library systems and their relations with city government. The study included surveys of branch libraries, community boards, and elected officials to obtain a broad range of facts and opinions about library strengths and shortcomings. On the key issues of trade-offs, restructuring, funding and budgeting, and performance, the report recommends: (1) a community-based planning process that could achieve improved services through branch consolidation rather than mandated closing of branches; (2) a new integrated policy planning function for the three systems; (3) some selected experiments in suburban-level funding and action to improve state aid prospects; and (4) an improved approach to budgeting and performance management. The report concludes with a statement supporting the significance of the library system for the City's future economy. (DMC)

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OPTIONS FOR NEW YORK CITY'S BRANCH LIBRARIES

A Report Prepared for the Library Study Committee:

Office of the Mayor
Office of Management and Budget
Office of Operations
Department of City Planning
Brooklyn Public Library
New York Public Library
Queens Borough Public Library

by

The Nova Institute
853 Broadway
New York, New York 10003

1983

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SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a year-long study of New York City's three public branch library systems, carried out by Nova in cooperation with a study committee composed of City and library officials.

Part One: Context

1.1 Background. The report opens with a brief historic account of the development of the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library and the Queens Borough Public Library systems. In the past ten years the city's libraries have been forced to cut back by 32% on the total hours of service they could offer the public; partly as a result, they have lost 23% of their circulation. No branches have been closed while new ones have opened to bring the total number to 195 -- about one branch for every 36,000 residents.

1.2 Standards and Comparisons. There are few meaningful national or state standards for libraries; New York's libraries meet most but NYPL and Brooklyn are below the national standards in several key areas. Compared with other city systems, New York's three systems are about on a par in terms of support per capita, use and holdings. However, when compared to other New York State systems, especially those in the nearby suburban counties, the city's libraries stack up poorly: for example, they receive only about half as much support in dollars per capita.

1.3 Attitudes. Surveys of branch libraries, community boards and elected officials were used to obtain a broad range of facts and opinions about library strengths and shortcomings. Survey results are described in text and tables.

Part Two: Options for Change

This part reports on five major components of the study which assessed various aspects of the libraries and how they might be improved.

2.1 Trade-offs. A detailed analysis was made of the possible savings and costs involved in closing low-performance branches. Twenty such branches were identified on the basis of use, effectiveness, efficiency and proximity measures. Closing all of these could save up to $2 million per year while maintaining the same total branch-hours of service -- but nearly all of these low-performance branches are located in low-income, minority neighborhoods and there are strong social and community reasons against closing them. The savings involved would amount to at most about 3% of the branch budget, or about the same as the annual PEG reduction in the library budget.

2.2 Restructuring. Examination of the potential benefits of two major forms of system restructuring suggest few additional benefits to the city from either (a) unifying the three branch library systems into a

single unit or (b) dividing NYPL into three borough-level systems providing separate library services to Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island. Similarly, a review of the school libraries suggests that it would be infeasible to integrate them with the branch libraries -- and also highlights the poor state of school libraries.

2.3 Finances. Analysis indicates that while the libraries have suffered from continuing financial pressures in the post-1978 period, they have fared about as well as comparable educational and cultural activities supported by the city. As of the end of 1982 the city's recurring financial problems threatened severe additional cuts for fiscal years 1983 and 1984 -- reversing a trend of modest post-crisis gains.

An examination of the equity in distribution of City funds among and within the three branch systems suggests: (1) that among the three systems, Queens has been relatively the best financed and Brooklyn the least well financed; and (2) within the three boroughs served by NYPL funding distribution appears to have been equitable.

City funds support over 80% of the branch library budgets. State aid provides about 16%, with recent formula changes improving the level of such aid but doing little to redress formula inequities that affect the city's systems. Federal aid is small and shrinking.

Prospects for revenues from other sources -- such as fines, contributions and fees -- are examined. None shows great promise.

2.4 Performance and Budgeting. This section presents a mission statement for the public libraries and suggests performance measures and budget format changes that could help support it.

2.5 Further Options examines the potential for market research to improve library use and describes a number of ideas considered during the course of the project.

Part Three: Recommendations

This final section presents the consultant's recommendations on the following subjects:

- Trade-offs. Mandated closing of branches is not recommended -- but the consultant urges a community-based planning process that could achieve improved services through branch consolidation.

- Restructuring. While no major structural changes were found desirable, the consultant recommends a new integrated policy planning function for the three systems.

- Funding. The consultant recommends some selected experiments in suburban-level funding and action to improve State aid prospects. There appears little

prospect that major reliance on City support for the libraries can be avoided.

° Budgeting and Performance. An improved approach to budgeting and performance management is recommended.

The report concludes with a statement supporting the significance of the library system for the city's future economy.

INTRODUCTION

In 1981, New York City included funds in its expense budget for the coming year to support a year-long policy analysis of issues affecting the relationship between the City and its public library systems. Among the factors leading to the study were concerns expressed by members of the City Council and the Board of Estimate regarding future directions of the branch library systems. The scope for the library study was developed through a joint effort of a committee which included representatives of the Office of the Mayor, the Office of Management and Budget and the directors of the three branch library systems that serve the city. At a later date, when the study was in its early stages, representatives of the Office of Operations and the Department of City Planning joined the policy-level committee that guided development of the study.

The Library Study Committee issued a request for proposal asking prospective consultants to submit statements describing the cost and scope of work which they proposed for the study. After reviewing the submittals and interviewing a number of prospective consultants, the Committee selected The Nova Institute to carry out the study effort. Nova is a nonprofit research organization located in New York City which has carried out policy analyses for a number of City agencies and nonprofit associations.

A contract for services describing the study was written between Nova and the Office of Management and Budget. The contract included provisions for the Library Study Committee to participate fully in the conduct of the project. The contract was approved unanimously by the Board of Estimate which includes as members the Mayor, Comptroller, City Council President and the Presidents of the five boroughs of the City.

Nova began work on the library study in January, 1982. Its work involved a number of discrete tasks focused on key concerns of City government and the three branch library systems. While addressing these tasks, Nova met on a monthly basis with members of the Committee to discuss progress memoranda setting forth its research findings and recommendations. During the course of the study effort input on concerns and directions was also sought through meetings with elected officials and library staff; in addition, an effort was made to offer a broad opportunity for comment and suggestions through the circulation of a detailed written questionnaire to all members of the City Council and Board of Estimate, to the 59 Community Boards and to nearly 200 branch librarians. Questionnaire responses are described in Part One of this report.

Scope of the Study

The principal purpose of the study effort was to examine a number of key issues affecting the library systems and their relations with city government. These included:

- Mission. In cooperation with the Committee, the consultant worked to spell out in agreed-on terms the mission and goals of the branch libraries.

- Relationships: The consultant looked at the overall structure of the three systems, including an assessment of whether consolidation into a single unified library system or further divisions along borough lines would produce significant benefits.

- Trade-Offs: Major effort was devoted to development of a series of trade-off options, including whether significant dollar savings or service upgrading could be attained through closing some branch libraries.

- Standards: The consultant reviewed how New York City's libraries compare with other systems in the state and nation and with national standards. Also, how library performance should be measured was examined.

- Financing: The consultant also examined the overall character of the fiscal relationships between the City and the libraries, including how library services have fared in relation to comparable functions in the period since the fiscal crisis and whether there are other sources of financing for libraries beyond the City budget.

All five of these aspects of library operations are discussed in the body of the report. Part One sets the overall context, describing how New York's branch libraries developed and how they reacted to the pressures of the fiscal crisis; this part also establishes a national and regional context to indicate how New York City compares in its support for library services. Part Two of the report examines a series of options for change -- in mission, in system structure, in hours of service and number of branches, and in other directions; this part constitutes the heart of the analytic effort of the project. Part Three sums up the difficulties obstructing change in the library systems in terms of financial, political and institutional constraints; this final part also contains the consultant's recommendations (which are not necessarily agreed to by all members of the Library Study Committee).

Acknowledgements

Nova would like to express our deep appreciation to the many City and library officials who participated in the conduct of this study effort. In particular, we are indebted to the members of the Library Study Committee who spent many hours reviewing and discussing our progress reports and suggesting changes in them. We have tried to

be as responsive as we could to all of their suggestions but -- as they know better than anyone else -- it was not always possible to arrive at conclusions that coincided with every legitimate viewpoint.

We are also indebted to the many librarians and other library staff, elected public officials and community boards who responded to our inquiries and provided both information and opinions. It became fully clear to us during the course of this project that New York's libraries represent a very strongly held set of values to the employees of the system, to the citizens in general and to their elected representatives.

While acknowledging our appreciation, we want to make it fully clear that only The Nova Institute is responsible for the contents of this report and for any errors of fact or interpretation that it may contain. Nova's participation in this project was led by its President, David A. Grossman. He was assisted by Bruce W. Gombos and Steven J. Rosenbloom.

QUEENS BOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY
SERVICE SCHEDULE
MONDAY 1-8
TUESDAY 1-5:30
WEDNESDAY 10-5:30
THURSDAY 1-8
FRIDAY 1-5:30
SATURDAY 12-5:30
Closes at 5:30

PART ONE: THE CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE LIBRARY STUDY

Origins of New York's Library Systems

New York City's public library services are provided by three separate entities, each of which receives public funds from the City (which account for most of the cost of their branch operations) as well as additional funds from the State of New York, the Federal government and from private contributions.

The Brooklyn Public Library provides library services to the borough of Brooklyn. The Queens Borough Public Library provides essentially parallel services to the borough of Queens. The New York Public Library serves three boroughs (Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island); in addition, NYPL operates Research Libraries* which are themselves beneficiaries of separately appropriated City support and which also receive substantial amounts of State and private support.

The three-component structure of New York City's public library system is of very long standing, dating back to the period of unification of the five boroughs at the turn of the century. Brief histories of the three systems, presented below, indicate the age of the present structure of the branch systems.**

The New York Public Library began as the outgrowth of mergers in 1895 among several private philanthropically-established private research libraries (primarily the Astor and Lenox libraries) and a bequest of New York State Governor Samuel Tilden. In 1900 the New York Free Circulating Library, a grouping of eleven circulating libraries, joined the research libraries. While some City funds were provided in the early years of NYPL, the corporation was -- and has remained -- a private non-profit corporation governed by its own board of trustees. In 1902, the Mayor, Comptroller and City Council President were added as ex-officio members of the board of trustees. NYPL was Manhattan-focused at its inception but soon extended its concerns to the Bronx (which was unified with Manhattan prior to general city consolidation in 1898) and also included a Staten Island branch in Tottenville at an early date.

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* The Research Libraries of NYPL are outside the scope of the current study effort.

** The principal sources of these historic notes are annual reports of the Brooklyn and Queens Borough Libraries and The New York Public Library: A History of Its Founding and Early Years, by Phillis Dain (NYPL: 1972).

The Brooklyn Public Library was established by act of the State legislature in 1892 and by act of the Brooklyn Common Council in 1898. The library began operation just prior to Brooklyn's unification with New York City in 1898. Further acts of the State legislature also established the Library as a public benefit corporation whose 22 trustees are appointed by the Mayor; ex-officio members include the Mayor, Borough President and Comptroller. In the early years of the Brooklyn Public Library its employees were considered municipal workers.

The first library service in Queens dates to 1896 when the City Council appropriated $3,000 to finance a library (initially known as the Long Island City Public Library). At first the Queens Library operated as a public agency, but in 1907 it received a State public benefit corporation charter as the Queens Borough Public Library. It is governed by 19 trustees appointed by the Mayor plus four ex-officio members (the Mayor, the Borough President, the Comptroller and the President of the City Council). As in the case of Brooklyn, in its earliest stages the Queens Borough Public Library staff were considered municipal employees.

Development of the Branch Systems

In the years following their establishment, the three branch library systems expanded along with the growth of the city to the point where they now include some 195 branch facilities. A major concern during the period of expansion was the issue of how closely spaced branches should be and how many people each should serve.

The first major public steps toward branch development can most properly be linked to the Carnegie grants of 1901 under which philanthropist Andrew Carnegie agreed to finance construction of 65 branches in all three library systems if the City of New York agreed to provide sites and support the operation of the facilities. Many of the branches built with Carnegie funds are still operating today.

The most significant review of branch library development was done by Githens and Munn in a report prepared for the New York City Planning Commission in 1945.* In their study, Githens and Munn began by citing a 1942 American Library Association standard that branch libraries should serve, on an average, an area within a mile to a mile and a half from the branch, and a minimum population of 25,000 to 55,000. They went on to note that the ALA standard should vary with size and density of city, with the service radius decreasing as density rises. For New York City, Githens and Munn recommended a standard based on walking distance: "there should be a stationary library unit within easy walking distance of every home. Insofar as libraries are concerned, walking distance is limited to one-half mile." (Page 39.) They went on to note that this standard -- which would imply a branch library within each square mile of urban area -- need not be met in sparsely settled parts of the city.

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* A Development Program for the Public Libraries of New York City, Githens and Munn (New York: 1945).

In the period following the issuance of the Githens and Munn report, and up to the fiscal crisis in 1975, New York City roughly followed a standard for new branch library location that assumed need for a branch in an area approximately one mile in diameter if that area also contained a residential population of at least 25,000 persons. If the spacing pattern were to have been followed consistently it would result in a branch library network where facilities were about one mile apart (and where few residents lived over half a mile from a branch).

New York City contains a total of 304 square miles of land area. On a one-mile spacing basis, this might have meant a total of over 300 branches. Excluding Staten Island where population density is still quite low, the remaining 247.9 square miles of land area would imply about 248 branches if all were to have been built to the one-mile spacing standard (or actually, slightly more if an effort were made to assure that no resident was more than half a mile from a branch).

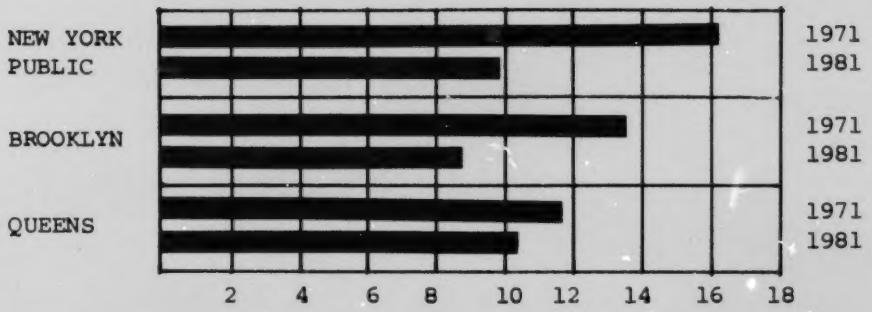
Many of the city's earlier branches were built to an even denser standard of spacing than the proposed one square mile standard while later ones generally served larger areas. Today, the city has 187 branches plus central facilities in its four most highly developed boroughs, or about three-fourths as many as would be called for under the one-mile apart standard. The existing four-borough average of 1.33 square miles per facility implies an average spacing of 1.3 miles or about 6,900 feet from branch to branch (if all branches were equally distant from adjacent facilities).

The last major expansion of the branch library system took place in the late 1960's and early 1970's at a time when the city still had ample amounts of capital funds. Many of the last group of branches initiated at that time were in Queens, the last of the larger boroughs (excluding Staten Island) to undergo population expansion. The onset of the fiscal crisis in 1975 caught a number of Queens branches in the final stages of construction; in the face of severe cutbacks they had to be mothballed for a number of years until funds finally became available to open them in the early 1980's.

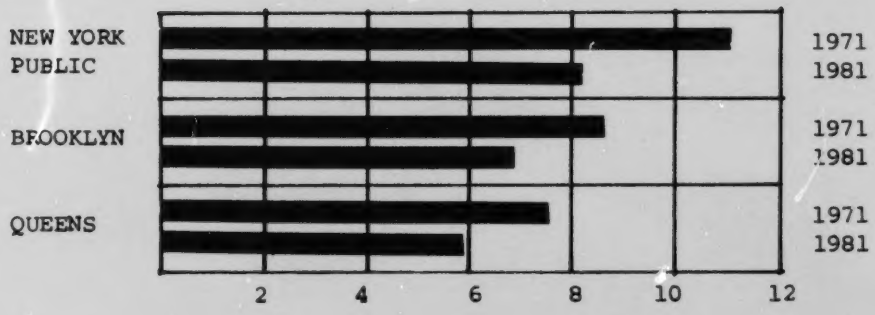
The Fiscal Crisis and the Branch Libraries

The fiscal crisis period of 1975 to 1978 was one of severe difficulty for the three library systems. They were forced to undergo sharp retrenchment, eased only slightly by the availability of CETA funds that enabled them to employ temporary personnel to ease some of the worst effects of the cutbacks.

The crisis cuts were absorbed by the library systems in two basic ways: reductions in staff and hours of service. At least two of the three systems considered the alternative approach of closing branches but found it unacceptable either to their service constituencies or to the City's governing bodies, the Board of Estimate and the City Council. The New York Public Library system went furthest



ANNUAL HOURS OF SERVICE (000's)
1971 and 1981



ITEMS CIRCULATED (millions)
1971 and 1981

TRENDS IN SERVICE AND CIRCULATION FOR NEW YORK CITY LIBRARIES

in this regard, announcing the anticipated closing of a number of branches; the Brooklyn Public Library did internal planning for branch closings but did not announce them publicly. The sharp negative response to NYPL's plars led all three systems to conclude that branch closings were an infeasible approach to resolution of their financial difficulties and that service hour reductions -- essentially mandated by staff cuts -- were an unfortunate but necessary mode of response. As will be noted in later sections of this report, the basic pattern of response in allocating service reductions in all three systems tried to take into account the level of use of branches so as to preserve to the maximum degree the level of service available to the public. Inevitably, other library operations suffered severely, including the size and quality of collections and invisible but essential internal staff operations.

As the fiscal crisis eased in the period following 1978, additional City appropriations made possible some additions to levels of service in all three systems, but in most cases it has not been possible to restore service to pre-1975 levels. As an indication of the degree of cutback, total branch hours of service in 1981 were 32% below those a decade earlier in 1971.

Origins of This Study Effort

The impact of the fiscal crisis exacerbated concerns long held about New York City's libraries both by people within the systems and in the central agencies of city government. A major cause of these concerns has been a secular downward trend in library circulation -- the single most available and comparable measure of use. Total circulation in New York City apparently peaked in the 1930's. A more recent peak in circulation occurred in the mid-1960's and has been followed by a continuing downward trend since that date.

Table 1.1 shows some of the key data on circulation and hours of service for the decade 1971-81. This period was selected for analysis because its start (1971) reflects a period of "normal" library operations before the impact of the fiscal crisis; the most recent data available during the study was for fiscal year 1981. Circulation was used as a surrogate for library use not because it is a precise measure of all use made of branch libraries but because it is the best such measure for which comparable and accurate data is generally available.

What the table shows is that even after recovery from the depths of the fiscal crisis by 1981, the three branch library systems offered 32% fewer hours of service to the public than a decade earlier. Despite this lower level of service available, the systems were able to keep their circulation losses to a 23% level, thus increasing their overall per hour service levels by an average of 13%. While this table is believed to reflect a generally accurate picture of the change that has taken place in the past decade, several factors need to be kept in mind in interpreting it:

- Overall City population went down by about 10% in this same ten year period; this alone could well have induced about half the circulation loss that was experienced.

- The Queens Borough system, which shows a different circulation per service hour trend than the other two, had just opened a number of branches in 1981 and they had not yet reached their full circulation levels.

The overall pattern of decline in library utilization and the pattern of response of the libraries to the fiscal pressures under which they were operating led a number of City officials to believe that it was important to re-examine some of the basic factors about library service in New York City. Among these concerns were questions about the structure of the branch systems, in particular whether the City was now providing too many branches for effective and efficient library service. Another factor that led to the study were parallel concerns by library officials over the cycle of declining financial resources, followed by declines in use and service, in which they found themselves caught. This study attempts to address some of those concerns; however, it should be noted that the study covers only a limited number of the possible subjects of research that could be undertaken with respect to New York's libraries. Within the scope of a one year project and a budget of less than $100,000 it was necessary to make careful choices about what aspects of the $60 million a year library system to examine. An effort was made to define the subjects of highest importance -- and ones where options for choice were most evident -- as the focus for the effort.

Table 1.1

HOURS OF SERVICE AND CIRCULATION LEVELS,
FISCAL YEARS 1971 AND 1981

A. Actual Levels

Branch System	Hours of Service		Circulation (000's)		Circulation per/ Hour of Service	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
NYPL	163,852	96,794	11,082.7	8,183.9	67.6	84.5
Brooklyn	136,656	86,472	8,501.9	6,730.8	62.2	77.8
Queens	117,905	102,598	7,493.1	5,954.3	63.6	58.0
Total	418,413	258,816	27,077.7	20,869.0	64.7	73.0

B. Change in Levels

Branch System	Hours of Service Change, 1971-81	Circulation (000's) Change, 1971-81	Circulation per/ Hour of Service Change, 1971-81
NYPL	-40.9%	-26.2%	+25.0%
Brooklyn	-36.7	-20.8	+25.0
Queens	-13.0	-20.5	- 8.8
Total	-31.7%	-22.9%	+12.8%

1.2 STANDARDS AND COMPARISONS

Before proceeding to an examination of these options for change, it is useful to place New York's branch libraries in the context of comparable systems elsewhere in the state and nation. Also useful is to see how New York's libraries rank in comparison with established library standards. The remainder of this section presents such a comparative analysis.

STANDARDS

Very few standards have been set for libraries. In fact, there are no currrent agreed-on national standards and New York State has set only a minimal number of standards.

National Standards

The American Library Association (ALA) adopted a series of minimum standards for public library systems in 1966 (Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems, 1966, American Library Association, 1967). Only standards perceived by the ALA as directly related to the quality of library services were included. Measures that were quantitative but not qualitative were excluded. Thus, standards were not set for many common measures of library performance such as per capita circulation or registered borrowers per capita. Standards were set for book holdings, maintenance of collections and a number of other items. A few are cited below for illustrative purposes:

- Libraries in areas serving 1,000,000 people or more should own at least two volumes per capita.
- Collections should be maintained by annual additions and replacements of not less than 1/8 volume per capita in areas serving over 500,000 people.
- There should be at least one full-time staff member for each 2,000 people in the service area. (Professional and clerical personnel are counted as staff members for this purpose, but maintenance and security personnel are not.)
- Community libraries serving more than 25,000 people should be open between 66 and 72 hours weekly.

ALA has not updated these minimum standards since they were set more than 15 years ago, and few library professionals any longer use the standards as a guide. Nevertheless, it is informative to compare the various City library systems to these most recent national standards. Table 1.2 shows such a comparison.

Table 1.2

COMPARISON OF VARIOUS MEASURES OF CITY LIBRARY PERFORMANCE
WITH AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MINIMUM STANDARDS

Branch System	Book Holdings Per Capita		Books Added, 1980		Staff Levels, 1980	
	ALA Standard	Actual	ALA Standard	Actual	ALA Standard	Actual
New York Public Library	2.0	1.23	368,672	278,048	1,475	1,127
Brooklyn Public Library	2.0	1.62	278,867	303,128	1,115	6[illegible]
Queens Public Library	2.0	2.17	236,415	262,640	946	614

Notes:
1. All per capita data based on the 1980 census.
2. ALA standards for each system calculated by Nova based on the criteria set by the ALA.
3. There is a discrepancy between what is shown in the source document and data provided to Nova by the Queens Borough Public Library for 1980 staffing level. The Queens' data shows 723 filled positions rather than the 614 reported in the State publication.

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980, New York State Education Department, 1981.

As of 1980, the Queens Borough Public Library met two of the three standards set by the ALA. The Brooklyn Public Library failed to meet the minimum standards for two of the three measures. The New York Public Library failed to meet the minimum standards set for any of the three measures. Not one of the three systems met the minimum staff level standard. NYPL had 24% fewer persons on staff than the minimum set by the ALA. Brooklyn had 39% fewer staff members than the ALA manning standard calls for. Queens had 35% fewer staff members. Both the New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries also had fewer book holdings per capita than the minimum set by the ALA. NYPL fell 38% shy of the standard while Brooklyn had 19% fewer book holdings per capita than the ALA standard. NYPL also added 25% fewer books in 1980 than the ALA prescribed minimum.

In 1979, the ALA issued a new guide, The Public Library Mission Statement and Its Imperatives for Service. This was published as an interim document to replace Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems, 1966, which was more than a decade old. In lieu of a revised set of service standards which were said to be "under development," the new guide modifies the library's mission and spells out the implications of the revised mission statement for the delivery of library services.

The Imperatives for Services section of the 1979 guide took a very different attitude toward standards. It notes that library performance must be measured by outputs or services rendered, rather than by inputs as was done in the past. The authors, though, did not develop quantitative guidelines against which public libraries can be measured. The ALA has yet to publish a revised set of service standards.

State Standards

Nova also reviewed excerpts from the New York State Education Law (December, 1981) pertaining to public libraries. A limited number of standards have been set by New York State. They are:

1. Libraries must be open a minimum number of weekly hours, depending on the population they serve.

2. One full-time staff member must be employed for each 5,000 residents of the area served by the system.

3. Each system must add annually at least 4,000 titles not previously held by the system.

Table 1.3 compares the performance of the various New York City library systems with these state standards.

It is not clear that the standards set by New York State are terribly relevant for the three New York City library systems. While the various systems all fall far short of the state standard for service hours they exceed by equally significant amounts the standards set for the other two measures.

Table 1.3

COMPARISON OF VARIOUS MEASURES OF CITY LIBRARY PERFORMANCE WITH NEW YORK STATE STANDARDS

	Service Hours, 1980-81		Book Titles Added, 1980		Staff Levels, 1980	
Branch System	NYS Standard	Actual	NYS Standard	Actual	NYS Standard	Actual
New York Public Library	3,735	1,861	4,000	21,707	590	1,127
Brooklyn Public Library	2,655	1,662	4,000	18,126	446	685
Queens Public Library	2,610	2,041	4,000	17,381	378	614

Notes: 1. The New York State standard for service hours for each of the three systems is an approximation. It was derived by multiplying the average population served by a branch library in New York City (between 30,000 and 40,000 people) by the minimum hours of public service per week (45 hours) required of a library serving that size population.

Sources: 1. Data on actual service hours is based on information issued by the three systems during fiscal year 1981.

2. Data on book titles added is from the three library systems.

3. Data on persons on staff is from Public and Association Libraries Statistics, 1981.

Furthermore, the state does not suggest a relationship between the number of branches within a system and the population served; thus, if the various New York City library systems had fewer branches, the state standard for service hours could be met. This is because a reduction in branches decreases the standard (because the standard is partly determined by the number of branches) and does not increase (within the population range under discussion) the number of hours each branch should remain open to meet the state standard. For example, the Queens system could meet the state standard if its system was reduced to 45 branches. This would reduce the state standard for service hours to 2,025 as compared to the actual 2,041 hours of public service provided by the Queens Public library. This is not to argue in favor of eliminating branches or to suggest that fewer branches with greater service hours is preferable to more branches with fewer hours of operation. It is just to suggest that the library systems' failure to meet this standard may not be a significant measure of system performance and could in fact be achieved through changes in resource allocation rather than with substantial amounts of new resources.

In sum, neither national nor state organizations have developed many standards for library performance. Those set by New York State can generally be met by the various New York City library systems. The standards set by the American Library Association are more rigorous and exceeded current performance levels of the New York Public Library in all three of the areas considered, of Brooklyn in two of the three, and of Queens in one out of three areas.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There is a sufficient amount of data available to undertake a comparative analysis of the various New York City library systems with library systems in other major American cities and with other New York State library systems. Data for the comparisons was taken from studies by the State Education Department, (1); the New York City Comptroller's Office, (2); and the American Library Directory (3).

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(1) Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980, The State Education Department, Albany, New York, 1981.

(2) A Comparative Analysis of New York City Libraries With Other Public Library Systems Across the Country: Their Utilization, Budgets and Other Factors, Office of the Comptroller, City of New York, New York, New York, 1981.

(3) American Library Directory 34th Edition, R.R. Bowker Company, New York, New York, 1981.

Comparison With Other Urban Libraries

The three New York City library systems were compared with six other American library systems. The library systems selected were the six other largest city systems responding to the Comptroller's Office survey. In Nova's judgment, large city systems provide a better basis of comparison for New York City than do either county systems or smaller cities.

The urban library systems which responded to the Comptroller's survey and which were selected for the comparative analysis are:

System	Population
Brooklyn Public Library	2,230,936
Chicago Public Library	3,366,957
Detroit Public Library	1,514,063
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	783,320
Free Library of Philadelphia	1,688,210
Los Angeles Public Library	2,817,800
New York Public Library	2,949,378
Queens Borough Public Library	1,891,325
San Diego Public Library	842,200

Circulation

On average, New York City's three public library systems tend to circulate slightly more items per capita than do the other six major city library systems. Table 1.4 shows the number of items circulated by the nine systems, their circulation per capita and their circulation per capita ranking.

As Table 1.4 shows, the Brooklyn Public Library had a total circulation of 6,915,349 and a circulation per capita of 3.10, highest on a per capita basis of the New York City systems and 0.20 items per capita above the mean of the nine systems being compared. Of the group, Brooklyn Public Library ranked third in circulation per capita, trailing only the San Diego and Los Angeles Public Libraries.

The Queens Borough Public Library and the New York Public Library ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, in circulation per capita. Queens had a circulation per capita of 3.09; New York's per capita circulation was 2.91. Both systems were slightly above the mean for the group (2.90).

Table 1.4

COMPARISON OF CIRCULATION PER CAPITA OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Circulation	Circulation Per Capita	Per Capita Rank
San Diego Public Library	4,102,386	4.87	1
Los Angeles Public Library	10,836,108	3.84	2
Brooklyn Public Library	6,916,349	3.10	3
Queens Public Library	5,852,476	3.09	4
New York Public Library	8,600,011	2.91	5
Free Library of Philadelphia	4,903,301	2.90	6
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	2,173,538	2.75	7
Chicago Public Library	7,229,063	2.14	8
Detroit Public Library	1,921,921	1.26	9
Mean	5,837,239	2.90	--

Note: Circulation data includes both book and non-book items.

Source: American Library Directory, 1981.

Book Holdings

Book holdings per capita is a quantitative measure of a qualitative concern: a library system's ability to satisfy the demands of its users for books either for circulation or for reference. (However, it must be recognized that books are only one form of a library's holdings: other forms include periodicals, recordings, videocassettes and pictures; unfortunately, consistent data on these other holdings is not readily available.)

Table 1.5 lists the book holdings for each system studied, plus their book holdings per capita and their ranking in book holdings per capita. Only one of the three New York City systems is above the mean in book holdings per capita. The Queens Public Library ranked third out of the nine systems reviewed. Queens had book holdings of 3,712,887 and holdings per capita of 1.96 (0.18 book holdings per capita better than the mean). Brooklyn had book holdings per capita of 1.68 which placed it slightly below the mean of 1.78. Brooklyn ranked sixth of the nine systems surveyed. The New York Public Library ranked at the bottom of the nine systems compared with a book holdings per capita of 1.21, 0.53 below the mean. The New York Public Library would have to add more than one and a half million books (1,577,837) to reach the average level for the nine systems. On the other hand, selected data suggests that the New York Public Library appears to have more non-book holdings than most other systems.

Table 1.5

COMPARISON OF BOOK HOLDINGS PER CAPITA OF
NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS
WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Book Holdings	Book Holdings Per Capita	Rank
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	2,157,077	2.75	1
Los Angeles Public Library	5,811,324	2.06	2
Queens Borough Public Library	3,712,887	1.96	3
San Diego Public Library	1,645,912	1.95	4
Free Library of Philadelphia	2,930,607	1.73	5
Brooklyn Public Library	3,756,319	1.68	6
Detroit Public Library	2,512,917	1.65	7
Chicago Public Library	4,198,612	1.24	8
New York Public Library	3,672,056	1.21	9
Mean	3,366,411	1.78	--

Notes: 1. Non-book holdings are excluded.

2. The book holdings of the New York Research Libraries are not included.

Source: American Library Directory, 1981.

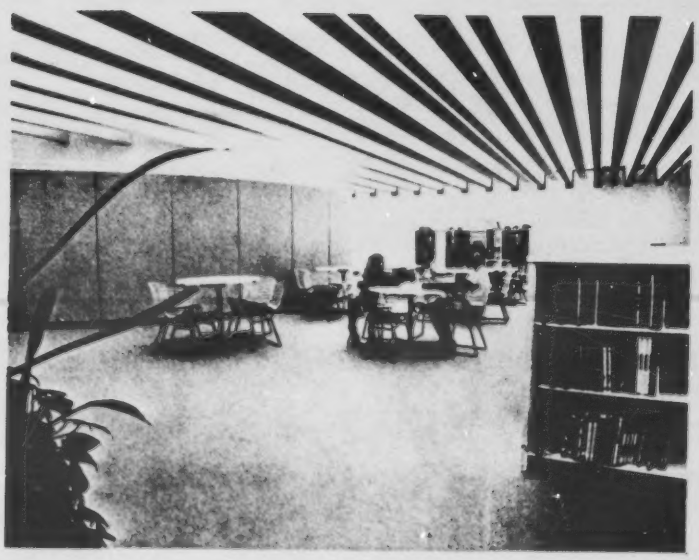


Table 1.6

COMPARISON OF BRANCHES PER HUNDRED THOUSAND POPULATION OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Branch Libraries	Branch Libraries Per Hundred Thousand Population	Rank
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	35	4.46	1
San Diego Public Library	29	3.44	2
Free Library of Philadelphia	52	3.08	3
Queens Borough Public Library	58	3.06	4
New York Public Library	83	2.84	5
Brooklyn Public Library	59	2.64	6
Chicago Public Library	81	2.40	7
Los Angeles Public Library	66	2.34	8
Detroit Public Library	28	1.84	9
Mean	54	2.68	--

Source: American Library Directory, 1981.

Table 1.7

COMPARISON OF BRANCHES PER SQUARE MILE OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Branches	Land Area (Square Miles)	Branches Per Square Mile	Rank
Brooklyn Public Library	59	70.3	.839	1
New York Public Library	83	121.4	.684	2
Queens Borough Public Library	58	108.0	.537	3
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	35	78.3	.446	4
Free Library of Philadelphia	52	128.5	.404	5
Chicago Public Library	81	222.6	.363	6
Detroit Public Library	28	138.0	.202	7
Los Angeles Public Library	66	463.7	.142	8
San Diego Public Library	29	316.9	.091	9
Mean	54	182.9	.295	--

Sources: 1. Data on number of branch libraries was from the American Library Directory, 1981.

2. Data on land area was obtained from County and City Data Book 1972, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1973.

Branch Density

There has been much debate as to whether the various New York City library systems have an appropriate number of branches. Table 5 shows the number of branches for each system studied, the number of branches per hundred thousand population and their branches per population ranking.

As Table 1.6 shows, two of the three New York City libraries are above the mean of 2.68 branches per hundred thousand population. The Queens Public Library ranked third in this measure with slightly more than three branches (3.06) for every 100,000 people. Queens was 0.38 above the mean. The New York Public Library was slightly above the mean. The New York system has 2.89 branches per hundred thousand people, 0.16 above the mean. Brooklyn was just below the mean with 2.64 branches for every 100,000 people as compared to the mean of 2.68. None of the three City systems appears to have an excessive number of branches as compared to other urban library systems.

Branches Per Square Mile

Table 1.7 lists the nine systems studied and shows the number of branches for each system, the land area served, the branches per square mile and the rank.

New York City's three public library systems had more branches per square mile than any of the other systems reviewed. This is at least partially due to the great population density in New York City, compared to most other cities. The Brooklyn Public Library had more branches per square mile than any other library system. Brooklyn's figure of 0.839 branches per square mile was 0.544 above the mean. The New York Public Library with 0.683 branches per square mile ranked second and was 0.388 above the mean. Queens Borough Public Library ranked third with 0.537 branches per square mile and was 0.242 above the mean.

Hours of Public Service

Total hours of public service is a measure of the availability of library services. Seven of the nine library systems in our comparison group provided the Comptroller's Office with their total scheduled hours of service for fiscal year 1978. Table 1.8 lists the systems, their total hours of public service, their hours of service per capita and their respective ranks.

The three New York City systems were either at or below the mean of 0.054 scheduled hours per capita. The Queens Borough Public Library and the Brooklyn Public Library ranked fourth and fifth respectively with 0.055 and 0.053 scheduled hours of public service per capita which places Queens just slightly above the mean and Brooklyn just slightly below the mean. The New York system ranked sixth with 0.044 hours of service per capita. The New York Public Library was 0.010 below the mean and would have had to provide an additional 27,368 hours of service to reach the mean.

Table 1.8

COMPARISON OF THE TOTAL HOURS OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS AND OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS DURING FISCAL YEAR 1978

System	Total Hours of Public Service	Hours of Service Per Capita	Rank
San Diego Public Library	62,608	.074	1
Los Angeles Public Library	182,364	.065	2
Free Library of Philadelphia	103,554	.061	3
Queens Borough Public Library	105,353	.055	4
Brooklyn Public Library	118,983	.053	5
New York Public Library	131,898	.044	6
Detroit Public Library	56,912	.037	7
Mean	108,810	.054	-

Note: The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore and the Chicago Public Library did not respond to this question in the survey of other library systems conducted by the Office of the Comptroller.

Source: Data on total hours of public service was obtained from New York City Office of the Comptroller Library Survey of Other Systems.

Persons on Staff

Table 1.9 lists the nine systems studied and provides in full-time equivalents the number of people they have on staff, their staff per thousand population and their rankings.

The Queens Public Library employed 1,109 people with a resulting 0.586 staff persons per thousand population. This placed Queens second among the nine systems studied, trailing only the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore which had 0.610 staff persons per thousand population. The New York Public Library with 0.507 staff persons per thousand population ranked seventh with 0.403 staff persons per thousand population and was 0.059 below the mean. Brooklyn would have had to add 131 full-time employees in order to reach the mean.

Library Income

The American Library Directory reported the total income received by each library system. Included was aid received from City, State and Federal governments, gifts and restricted funds. For eight of the nine systems the income data was for fiscal year 1981. For the Free Library of Philadelphia the data was for fiscal year 1980. Table 1.10 lists the systems and provides their total income per capita and their respective rankings.

Table 1.9

COMPARISON OF PERSONS ON STAFF PER THOUSAND POPULATION OF
NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS
WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS DURING FISCAL YEAR 1978

System	Persons on Staff	Persons on Staff Per Thousand Population	Rank
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	478	.610	1
Queens Public Library	1,109	.586	2
Free Library of Philadelphia	864	.511	3
New York Public Library	1,498	.507	4
Chicago Public Library	1,475	.438	5
Los Angeles Public Library	1,230	.436	6
Brooklyn Public Library	900	.403	7
Detroit Public Library	515	.340	8
San Diego Public Library	286	.339	9
Mean	928	.462	

Source: Data on staff positions for each library system was obtained from New York City Office of the Comptroller's Library Survey of Other Systems.

Table 1.10

COMPARISON OF PER CAPITA INCOME OF
NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS
WITH OTHER MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1981

vstem	Income	Per Capita Income	Rank
Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore	$10,624,644	$13.56	1
Free Library of Philadelphia	21,356,036	12.65	2
Detroit Public Library	14,755,850	9.74	3
Queens Public Library	18,273,168	9.66	4
New York Public Library	28,188,531	9.55	5
Chicago Public Library	31,690,811	9.41	6
Brooklyn Public Library	17,949,598	8.04	7
San Diego Public Library	5,896,921	7.00	8
Los Angeles Public Library	18,470,350	6.55	9
Mean	18,578,434	10.27	

Notes: 1. Income data for the Free Library of Philadelphia is for fiscal year 1980.

2. The data on total income for NYPL from the American Library Directory ($34,700,000) is significantly higher than the income in City budget figures. This is because NYPL included pensions and funds that do not pass through the City budget in the information provided to the American Library Directory. The Queens and Brooklyn Public Libraries did not include these funds in their submissions. To achieve consistency among the income figures for the various City library systems the income for NYPL was recalculated.

Source: American Library Directory, 1981 for all systems except NYPL. Income for NYPL was recalculated to make it consistent with income data from the Brooklyn and Queens Public Libraries.

None of the three New York City library systems had incomes per capita greater than the mean of $10.27. The Queens Public Library ranked fourth of the nine systems studied. Its per capita income of $9.66 was $0.61 below the mean. The New York Public Library with an income per capita of $9.55 was $0.72 below the mean. The Brooklyn Public Library was $2.23 below the mean with an income per capita of $8.04. Brooklyn would require nearly five million dollars ($4,962,114) in additional income to have a per capita income equal to the mean figure.

Summing Up: National Comparisons

The performance of the three New York City public library systems appears generally quite comparable to that of other large City library systems in the United States. In most cases either two or three of the New York City library systems either attain or exceed the mean performance level achieved by the ten systems reviewed. This is a more favorable outcome than that reflected in the Comptroller's Office study which compared the three New York City systems to a larger sample which included library systems in both counties and smaller cities. We believe the analysis presented in this memorandum may be more relevant because the comparison group has been restricted to library systems which share many of the demographic, administrative and financial characteristics faced by New York City's libraries.

Comparison with Other New York State Library Systems

While the best comparison for New York City's libraries may be with other large urban systems, it is also instructive to compare them to the five other largest New York State library systems. The eight largest library systems in the State are:

System	Population, 1980
Brooklyn Public Library	2,230,936
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	1,015,472
Nassau Library System	1,321,582
New York Public Library	2,949,378
Pioneer Library System	973,278
Queens Public Library	1,891,325
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	1,284,231
Westchester Library System	866,599

Three of the library systems -- Nassau, Westchester and Suffolk -- serve suburban counties near New York City. The other two systems -- Buffalo and Erie County, and Pioneer -- serve diverse areas in western New York. The Pioneer Library System consists of five counties; of these, one county (Monroe) is comprised of a medium-sized city and its suburbs while the other four counties (Livingston, Ontario, Wayne and Wyoming) are predominantly rural.

This section relies on data from the State Education Department's Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980 for its information on library system performance. For the various New York City library systems there may be minor differences within a performance category between the information in this report (and used in this section) and data gathered either by the American Library Directory or the Comptroller's survey which was used in the prior section. This is apparently because of differences in definitions, time periods and methods of data collection.

Circulation

New York City's three public library systems tend to circulate considerably fewer books per capita than do the other five major New York State library systems. Table 1.11 shows the number of items circulated by these systems, their circulation per capita and their rankings.

As Table 1.11 shows, the Queens Public Library had a total circulation of 5,829,145 and a circulation per capita of 3.08. This was the highest circulation per capita of the various New York City systems, but placed Queens sixth of the eight systems reviewed. Queens was 1.53 items per capita below the mean of the eight systems and 5.23 items per capita below Nassau which ranked first. Queens would have had to circulate an additional three million items (3,078,996) yearly in order to reach the mean of 4.71.

The Brooklyn Public Library circulated 6,800,113 books and had a circulation per capita of 3.04. Brooklyn would have had to circulate an additional 3.7 million items to reach the mean.

The New York Public Library had a circulation per capita of 2.76, the lowest of the eight systems reviewed. The New York system would have had to circulate nearly six million additional items (5,745,488) to reach the mean of 4.71 items per capita.

The three New York City libraries had an average circulation per capita of 2.97. This was only 42% of the average circulation per capita (7.00) of the non-New York City library systems.

Table 1.11

COMPARISON OF CIRCULATION PER CAPITA OF
NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS
WITH OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Circulation	Circulation Per Capita	Per Capita Rank
Nassau Library System	10,994,717	8.31	1
Pioneer Library System	7,055,041	7.24	2
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	8,911,484	6.93	3
Westchester Library System	5,912,959	6.82	4
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	5,360,049	5.27	5
Queens Public Library	5,829,145	3.08	6
Brooklyn Public Library	6,800,113	3.04	7
New York Public Library	8,146,082	2.76	8
Mean	7,376,199	4.71	
New York City System Average	6,924,113	2.93	
Non-New York City System Average	7,646,850	7.00	

Note: Circulation data includes both book and non-book items.

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980.

Book Holdings

New York City's library systems have fewer book holdings per capita than the other State systems. Table 1.12 lists the book holdings for each system studied, shows their book holdings per capita and their rankings.

The mean for the eight systems studied was 2.34 book holdings per capita; all three of the New York City systems were below this level. Queens had book holdings of 4,116,109 and holdings per capita of 2.17. Queens ranked sixth of the eight systems. Brooklyn and New York followed Queens with book holdings per capita of 1.62 and 1.23, respectively. The number of additional book holdings necessary to reach the mean was approximately 300,000 books for Queens, more than 1.6 million books for Brooklyn and more than three million books for the New York Public Library.

The three New York City libraries had average book holdings per capita of 1.60. This was less than half (49%) of the average book holdings per capita (3.29) of the non-New York City library systems.

Table 1.12

COMPARISON OF BOOK HOLDINGS PER CAPITA OF
NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS
WITH OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Book Holdings	Book Holdings Per Capita	Per Capita Rank
Nassau Library System	5,553,992	4.20	1
Westchester Library System	2,813,578	3.24	2
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	3,267,532	3.21	3
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	3,820,847	2.97	4
Pioneer Library System	2,518,728	2.58	5
Queens Public Library	4,116,109	2.17	6
Brooklyn Public Library	3,611,491	1.62	7
New York Public Library	3,645,436	1.23	8
Mean	3,668,464	2.34	
New York City System Average	3,791,012	1.60	
Non-New York City System Average	3,594,935	3.29	

Notes:
1. The New York Research Libraries with 6,594,567 book holdings were excluded. These facilities located in Manhattan serve New Yorkers and other interested scholars.

2. The New York Public Library appears to have a significantly greater number of non-book holdings than the other systems studied. Nevertheless, even if NYPL's non-book holdings (2,440,373 items) are added to its book holdings, the combined holdings per capita (2.09) is still below the book holdings per capita of six of the other seven systems studied (each of which has its own smaller collection of non-book holdings).

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980.

Branch Density

Table 1.13 shows the number of branches for each of the systems reviewed, the number of branches per hundred thousand population and their branches per capita ranking.

As Table 1.13 shows, the three New York City systems have significantly higher branch service populations -- or fewer branches per hundred thousand residents -- than the other major library systems in New York State. The Queens Public Library ranked sixth in this measure with slightly more than three branches (3.01) for every hundred thousand people. Queens was 1.16 branches below the mean for the eight systems. Queens would need to have had 79 branches -- or an additional 20 branches -- to reach the mean number of branches on a per capita basis. The New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries have even fewer branches per capita. New York has 2.81 branches per hundred thousand people, or 1.36 branches below the state mean. Brooklyn has 2.64 branches per hundred thousand people, or 1.53 branches below the mean figure. Put differently, each library branch in Brooklyn serves 37,812 persons while each branch in the Pioneer Library System -- which ranked highest in this measure -- serves 12,478 people.

The three New York City libraries averaged 2.81 branches per hundred thousand people. This is less than half the branch density (47%) of the non-New York City libraries which averaged 5.93 branches per hundred thousand people.

Table 1.13

COMPARISON OF BRANCHES PER HUNDRED THOUSAND POPULATION OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Branches	Branches Per Hundred Thousand Population	Rank
Pioneer Library System	78	8.01	1
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	72	7.09	2
Westchester Library System	48	5.53	3
Nassau Library System	66	4.99	4
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	60	4.67	5
Queens Public Library	57	3.01	6
New York Public Library	83	2.81	7
Brooklyn Public Library	59	2.64	8
Mean	65	4.17	
New York City System Average	66	2.81	
Non-New York City System Average	65	5.93	

Notes: Bookmobiles and other outlets were not included in the total of branch libraries.

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980.

Persons on Staff

Table 1.14 shows the number of staff members (in full-time equivalents) excluding maintenance personnel for each of the eight largest library systems in the State, their staff per thousand population and their rankings.

The New York Public Library system employed 1,127 people, or 0.382 staff persons per thousand population served. This places NYPL sixth among the eight systems reviewed, but first among the three New York City systems. NYPL was 0.126 staff persons per thousand population below the mean of 0.508 established by the eight systems. NYPL would have had to add 371 full-time people to reach the mean figure.

The Queens Public Library ranked seventh with 0.324 staff persons per thousand population and was 0.184 below the mean. The Brooklyn Public Library had 0.307 staff persons per thousand population; this was less than one-third the per capita staff of the Nassau Library System which ranked first with 0.941 persons on staff per thousand population.

In order to reach the State mean, Queens would have had to add 337 staff members while Brooklyn would have had to add 448 additional staff.

The three New York City libraries had 0.327 staff persons per thousand population. This was less than half (45%) the per capita staff of the non-New York City systems which had 0.720 staff persons per thousand population.

Table 1.14

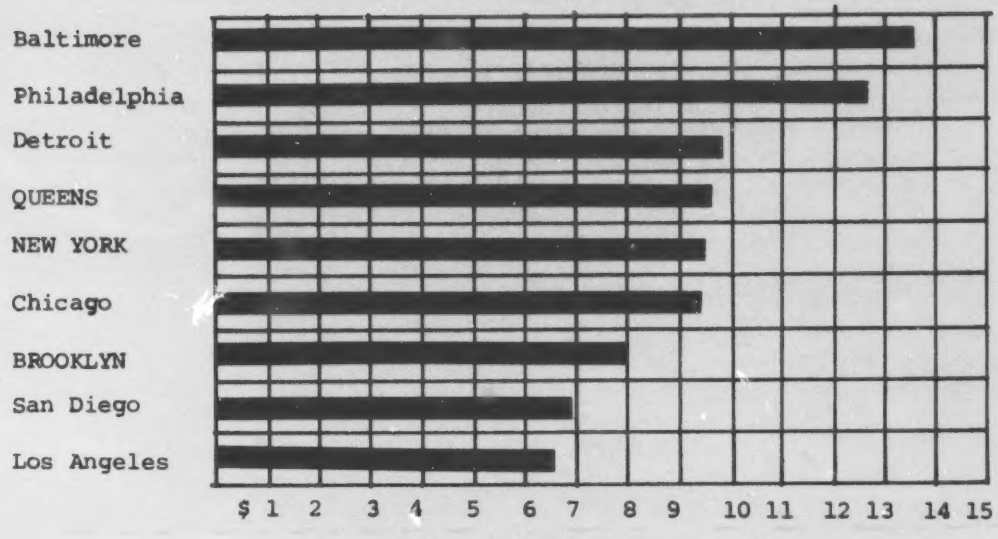
COMPARISON OF PERSONS ON STAFF PER THOUSAND POPULATION OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Persons on Staff	Persons on Staff Per Thousand Population	Rank
Nassau Library System	1,244	.941	1
Westchester Library System	690	.796	2
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	954	.742	3
Pioneer Library System	516	.530	4
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	529	.520	5
New York Public Library	1,127	.382	6
Queens Public Library	514	.324	7
Brooklyn Public Library	685	.307	8
Mean	795	.508	
New York City System Average	775	.327	
Non-New York City System Average	787	.720	

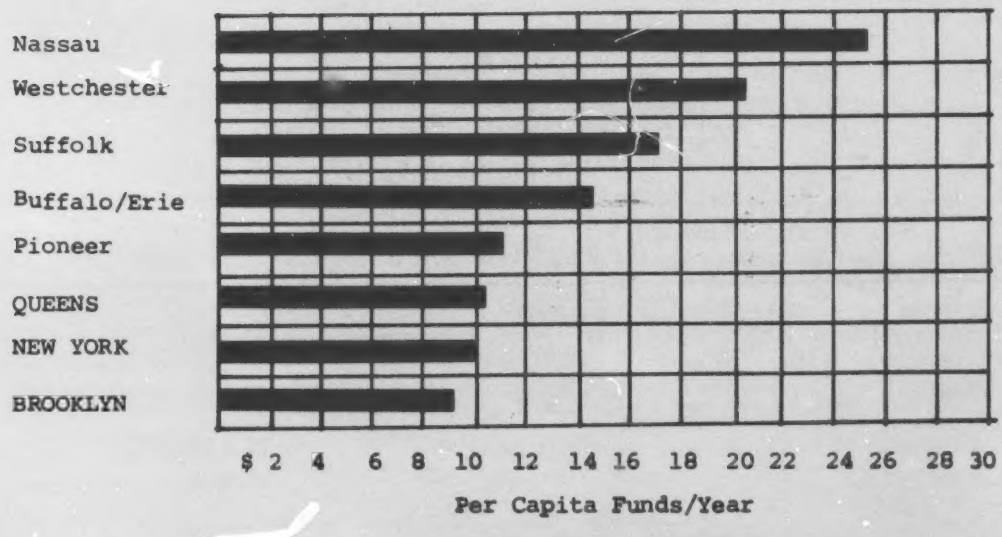
Note: Number of staff positions excludes maintenance personnel.

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980.

MAJOR CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS, 1981



NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS, 1980



COMPARISON OF OPERATING FUNDS PER RESIDENT PER YEAR

Operating Funds

All three New York City library systems received less operating funds per capita than the mean for the eight systems reviewed. Table 1.15 lists the eight systems and compares their total operating funds, their operating funds per capita and their per capita rank.

The Queens Public Library had operating funds of more than $20 million in 1980, equivalent to operating funds per capita of $10.66. This was the highest level of operating funds per capita for the three New York City systems; however, it placed Queens sixth out of the eight systems reviewed. Queens was $2.85 per capita below the mean of $13.51 per capita and spent less than half as much on library services per capita than did the Nassau Library System ($25.60 per capita). Put another way, the Queens Public Library would require more than $5 million in additional funds to reach the mean expenditure of $13.51 per capita.

The New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries would require even greater infusions of funds to reach the mean for the eight systems. The New York Public Library had operating funds per capita of $9.95 and would require more than $10 million to reach the mean. The Brooklyn Public Library, with operating funds per capita of $9.18, would need nearly an additional $10 million to achieve the mean per capita expenditure.

The three New York City libraries had average operating funds per capita of $9.89. This was more than $8.00 per capita shy of the average operating funds ($18.15) of the non-New York City library systems.

Table 1.15

COMPARISON OF TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS PER CAPITA OF NEW YORK CITY'S THREE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS WITH OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS FOR 1980

System	Operating Funds	Operating Funds Per Capita	Per Capita Rank
Nassau Library System	$33,840,430	$25.60	1
Westchester Library System	17,536,093	20.23	2
Suffolk Cooperative Library System	22,202,030	17.28	3
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library	14,833,948	14.60	4
Pioneer Library System	10,710,987	11.00	5
Queens Public Library	20,161,577	10.66	6
New York Public Library	29,352,144	9.95	7
Brooklyn Public Library	20,477,466	9.18	8
Mean	21,139,334	13.51	
New York City System Average	23,336,395	9.89	
Non-New York City System Average	19,824,697	18.15	

Source: Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1980.

Summing Up: State Comparisons

The characteristics of the three New York City library systems are not on a par with those of the five other New York State systems. For each of the five measures selected for comparative purposes, the New York City libraries ranked behind the other State systems and were considerably below the mean figure for the eight systems.

It can be seen from these analyses that the comparative performance of the various New York City library systems depends on what the City's library systems are compared with. The New York City libraries are roughly on par with the systems in other large cities; they are relatively -- and significantly -- worse off than library systems in suburban areas or in areas where library services are provided to a large city and its suburbs by county government.

1.3 ATTITUDES TOWARD NEW YORK'S LIBRARIES

In an effort to obtain a broad range of views of New York's branch libraries, survey questionnaires were distributed to three significant groups concerned with their operations:

- Questionnaires were sent to every one of the 195 branch libraries, addressed to the librarian in charge. The response was excellent: 177 branch librarians, 91% of the total, completed a detailed 11-page questionnaire. Response was high from all three systems: 95% in Brooklyn, 92% in NYPL; and 85% in Queens. (Some additional questionnaires were returned too late to be included in these tabulations.)

- A similar but somewhat less detailed questionnaire was sent to the 59 community boards. Response was fair with 16 boards, or 27% of the total, completing the form. Response rates ranged from a high of 39% of the Brooklyn boards to a low of 17% of the Manhattan boards.

- The less detailed questionnaire was also sent to the five Borough Presidents and to all members of the City Council. No Borough Presidents completed the questionnaire but 11 Councilmembers, 26% of the total, did.

This section of the report first summarizes the branch librarian responses to the questionnaire, followed by summaries of community board and elected official responses to many (but not all) of the same questions.*

Survey responses were tabulated by library system and by two other variables: income of the community district within which a branch is located and circulation.

As an approximate measure of the income within a branch's catchment area, we used the Community Development Agency's designation of community districts as either Primary Neighborhood Development Areas (Primary NDA's), Secondary Neighborhood Development Areas (Secondary NDA's) or non-poverty areas. Twenty-five community districts have been established as Primary NDA's, the districts with the highest levels of poverty. Nine community districts have been designated as Secondary NDA's, or areas of relatively less concentrated poverty. The remaining 25 community districts are considered to be non-poverty areas.**

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* More detailed memoranda were prepared by Nova on each of the response groups and are available from the Office of Management and Budget. Data on individual responses is not available because confidentiality was pledged to all survey respondents.

** Primary NDA's include: Bronx 1-7, 9; Brooklyn 1-9, 16; Manhattan 3, 7, 9-12; and Queens 12. Secondary NDA's include Bronx 12; Brooklyn 13, 14, 17; Queens 1-4 and 14; and Staten Island.

Branch library responses were placed into one of these three categories based on the community district within which the facility was located. Questionnaire responses were distributed among the three income classifications as follows:

	Number of Branches Responding
Non-Poverty Branches	86
Secondary NDA Branches	28
Primary NDA Branches	63
Total	177

1. What Should Be the Principal Mission of a Branch Library in the 1980's?

While the wording and emphasis varied from one respondent to another, the basic goals they suggested were reasonably similar:

- The acquisition of an adequate and well-rounded reading collection which should include new and popular titles as well as classical and serious works.
- Supporting education at all levels. This included complementing local schools, supporting school libraries, and providing self-education materials for adults who may not have access to other facilities.
- Providing basic, immediate reference and referral information for the entire community.
- Serving as a site for cultural and recreational programs which are of interest to the local community.
- Undertaking outreach activities to develop community awareness of and support for library services.

Librarians believed these services should be provided in print and non-print forms, for all age groups and income levels, and at various degrees of sophistication. It was stressed that services should be tailored to the needs of the surrounding community and should not be overly controlled by a central plan.

The statements did not suggest significant changes in current operations based either on the implementation of technological advances or on the reordering of existing activities.

2. Which Services Should Libraries Provide at a Regional or a Central Level?

Branch librarians believed that a number of library services could be handled more appropriately at either a regional or a central

level. In general, these functions fell into one of two categories: services of a non-traditional nature or specialized, expensive services.

For example, most branch librarians felt that local branches could not afford to have in-depth reference and research collections. Rather, extensive specialized collections for education or for business use were seen as a regional or a central library responsibility. These collections might include government documents and specialized reference materials such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's investment reports.

Other services seen as being better scaled for a regional or a central library included:

- Special audio-visual services such as a listening room or a film library.
- In-library programs which require larger facilities or a wider target population.
- Important non-fiction or more esoteric fiction titles which may be beyond most branches' budgets.
- Kurtzweil reading machines for the blind.

Branch librarians also indicated that many non-traditional services should be handled at the regional or central level. These services included vocational guidance programs and literacy assistance and other remedial programs.

3. Which Library Services Require More Than Ten Percent of a Branch's Effort and Resources?

The library services cited as requiring the greatest amount of branch effort and resources were:

- Leisure-time reading
- School system support
- Reference and research activities
- Pre-school educational opportunities

With minor variations this ordering held true across library systems, income levels and circulation levels. One major exception was that in the New York Public Library branches school system support was more often cited as a dominant use of time than was leisure-time reading.

When we examined how branch librarians would like to spend their time, there was a shift in emphasis toward adult education support and away from school system support and pre-school educational

opportunities. Otherwise, actual and ideal service priorities were similar. There was not a significant demand to increase the time spent on services where current effort and resources are only modestly devoted. These observations hold true across all categories.

Table 1.16 shows the tally for those services receiving the most effort and resources. A tally was recorded for each service either actually or ideally receiving more than ten percent of a branch library's efforts and resources.

TABLE 1.16

LIBRARY SERVICES REQUIRING MORE THAN
TEN PERCENT OF A BRANCH'S EFFORT AND RESOURCES

By Library System
(Number of Branches Responding)

Service	Brooklyn Tally		Queens Tally		New York Tally		City-wide Tally	
	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Leisure-time reading	49	48	48	46	46	50	143	144
School system support	42	22	38	28	51	41	131	91
Reference and research activities	14	17	18	20	29	27	61	64
Pre-school educational opportunities	10	7	18	13	11	9	39	29
Adult education support	7	16	6	10	10	12	23	38

Note: N = 177 branches
Source: Nova mail questionnaire to branch librarians

4. Which Age Groups Use Branch Libraries?

City-wide, the greatest proportion of branch library users are elementary school children. They are followed by working age adults, high-school age youth, and the elderly. This pattern of library use holds relatively true for all three systems. Utilization patterns differ markedly, however, from high circulation to low circulation branches and from non-poverty to lower income community districts.

With respect to circulation levels and library use, the most significant differences were found among the elderly. The elderly were the age group that most heavily patronized high circulation branches, but were the group least likely to use low circulation library branches. Working age adults were also found to be a more significant user group in branches with high circulation levels. Two groups that

tended to be more significant users in low circulation libraries were elementary school children and high-school age youth.

The relationships noted above between the predominant age range of users and circulation were also observed in the relationships between age groups and community district income level. Elementary school children and high school age youth were the most frequent library users in Primary NDA's. Working age adults and the elderly (as well as elementary school children) were the major library users in non-poverty community districts.

5. What Are the Most Common Reasons for Using Branch Libraries?

Leisure-time reading and school assignments are clearly the two most common reasons for using a branch library. Leisure-time reading was the primary use in all but two categories: among branches in the New York Public Library system and among the lowest circulation branches. In these categories, school assignments displaced leisure-time reading as the number one reason for library use. This finding is consistent with the response by NYPL librarians to a prior question which indicated that school system support was the dominant use of branch library effort and resources. This use pattern is also consonant with survey findings which showed that elementary school age children and high school age youth tended to be the dominant user groups in low circulation libraries.

The next two most common reasons cited for branch library use were personal business reading and/or research, and job-related reading and/or research.

Branch librarian responses to this question were similar across income and circulation levels.

6. What Do People Like About Branch Libraries?

Availability of materials and reference help were most often cited as the factors people liked about their branch libraries. These items were followed by the ease in finding materials, branch accessibility and the comfort and cleanliness of the library. The ranking essentially held true for all categories but one: libraries with the highest circulation. In this category, the quality of special programs and the days and hours of operation were seen as more important than the comfort of the library or the accessibility of materials.

There were no striking differences among systems or by community district income levels in responses to this question. High circulation branches tended to cite the quality of their special programs and their days of operation as especially appealing features; by contrast, low circulation branches more often tended to cite the comfort and cleanliness of the library as an appealing feature. In addition, a write-in response, the quality of staff assistance, was mentioned by many branch librarians.

7. What Are the Most Common Reasons for Non-Use of Branch Libraries?

On a city-wide basis the most common reasons for non-use of a branch library cited were:

- People don't read
- Service hours are insufficient
- People don't know about the library
- Inadequate reference materials
- People buy their own books

The relative importance of these factors varied significantly among the three metropolitan library systems. For example, branch librarians in the New York system overwhelmingly felt that insufficient service hours were the single most significant factor while Queens librarians felt just as strongly (by more than a margin of two to one compared to any other factor) that the most important problem was that people don't read. Similarly, lack of knowledge about the branch library was the second most important factor to New York librarians but ranked only fifth in Queens. Finally, the public's preference for buying its own books ranked second in Queens but no better than seventh in Brooklyn and ninth in New York.

Similar differences were observable by both income level and circulation level. Inadequate reference materials was cited as the third most important reason for non-use of a branch library in non-poverty areas, but was considered an insignificant factor in community districts designated as either Secondary or Primary NDA's. The location of the library branch in an unsafe area was a major concern in low circulation branches but was otherwise not seen as the primary reason for non-use of a branch library.

It should be noted that a write-in response, inadequate materials, was quite often cited in both the Brooklyn and New York responses as being the most significant reason for non-use of branch libraries. This explanation was not offered by librarians in Queens.

8. What Additional Services Would Increase Public Use and/or Satisfaction with Branch Libraries?

More books, more staff and more hours of operation were repeatedly cited as the services which would most increase the public's use and/or satisfaction with branch libraries.

More books for adults was seen to be the single most important factor for the three systems as a whole. More books for children ranked fourth and more books for teenagers seventh out of the fifteen services listed. Additional books for children scored slightly higher among branches located in Secondary and Primary NDA's than it did in non-poverty areas.

More staff and more weekday hours of service were generally seen as the next two best ways to increase public satisfaction and use. Suggestions to increase hours other than weekday service hours also received strong support.

Some factors such as more films and records, more in-library programming and the introduction of personal computers for patron use received scant support across all categories. For other factors support varied by circulation and income. For example, more research and reference materials were often recommended by non-poverty and high circulation branches. On the other hand, more materials and library programs for minorities were often suggested by libraries with low circulation and by those in areas designated as Primary NDA's.

9. Which Services Are Branch Librarians Willing to Give Up?

Branch librarians were asked which services they would be prepared to sacrifice in order to obtain the additional services they had requested. A similar list of factors was used for both questions. Many of the services that librarians did not wish to add were among those they were most willing to give up. These included:

- Reductions in the purchase and lending of films, records and other non-print materials.
- Reductions in special collections in specific subject areas.
- Reductions in in-library programming.

In the crucial areas of service hours and books, librarians were most willing to reduce evening hours and books for teenagers. Librarians in Queens and librarians whose branches were located in Secondary NDA's were most likely to recommend reductions in evening hours. Branch librarians in the New York system were far more likely to suggest reducing the number of books purchased for teenagers than were librarians in the other two systems.

10. How Would Librarians Revise Their Hours of Operation?

More than half (48%) of all branch librarians responding to this question felt that their current hours were ideal, given their total service hours per week. Slightly more than half (52%) of all branch librarians would like to make some changes in their weekly schedule. Most often (18%) these changes were fairly minor and would result in an increase of some weekday hours and a decrease in others. When more pronounced shifts were suggested they were usually either to increase Saturday hours (12%) or to increase weekday hours and decrease evening hours (11%).

There were a few noticeable distinctions among the principal categories. Branch librarians in Queens were more likely to favor a shift toward weekday hours and away from evening hours (23%). This is consistent with our earlier finding that librarians in Queens were very

willing to reduce evening hours in exchange for other services. Librarians whose branches were located in communities designated as Secondary NDA's also recommended an increase in weekday hours and a decrease in evening hours. This, again, was in accord with responses to previous questions.

Librarians in the NYPL system were most likely to favor increases in Saturday service hours (24%). Finally, librarians whose branches circulated more than 200,000 items in fiscal year 1982 were the group most likely to recommend increasing Sunday hours while decreasing other hours.

11. New Technologies for Branch Libraries

A large majority of branch librarians in Brooklyn and in the NYPL system recommended new technologies for adoption by their library system. Branch librarians in Queens were less likely to make recommendations of new technologies but this appears to be the case because many of the improvements recommended by librarians in the other two systems have already been implemented in Queens.

The two technological advances most frequently requested were computerized circulation systems and computerized collection systems. A computerized circulation system would cover functions such as registration and check-out. It would enable librarians to determine who has materials and when they are due to be returned. Delinquent borrowers could be notified promptly about overdue books, reducing the time lag between overdue date and notification. The system would also help alert library staff as to when delinquent borrowers tried to use library cards. Librarians in Queens, where an automated circulation system is already in place, suggested that their system would be improved if more details about the borrower's library record appeared on the computer screen.

A computerized collection system would assist with the reserve system, inventory control and book purchasing. It would enable librarians and patrons to easily determine what is owned, where it is located and if it is available.

12. Should Library Branches Be Consolidated?

More than seven out of every ten librarians (72%) responding to this question felt that library services could not be improved by closing some neighborhood branches while expanding the hours and services offered at other nearby branches. Opposition to branch consolidation was greatest among: librarians in the New York system; librarians whose branches were located in community districts designated as Primary NDA's; libraries where total items circulated in fiscal year 1982 was less than 50,000; and -- in perhaps somewhat of an anomaly -- libraries whose circulation was between 150,000 and 200,000 items in 1982.

Branch consolidation was seen as a viable option by only one group: librarians whose branches circulated more than 200,000 items in 1982. Half of the librarians in this category supported the idea.

Closing a library was viewed as a drastic measure by many branch librarians. It was seen as robbing a neighborhood of a source of civic pride and unity and depriving large segments of the public -- particularly pre-school age children, the elderly, the disabled and the poor -- of library service. Many felt that cost effectiveness must give way in this instance to a commitment to the greater good.

Librarians who favored consolidation felt that some branches were very underutilized because they are located in an unsafe area or because their public doesn't read. If these branches were closed, staff size and service hours could be increased in the remaining branches and more book money made available to be spent on collection enrichment rather than duplicating many small collections.

13. Should All-Purpose Libraries Be Replaced by Special Purpose Libraries?

Most librarians (87%) believe that special purpose libraries could not meet the needs of library users and, therefore, could not replace the all-purpose library. These librarians saw the great strength of a neighborhood branch as its ability to fill a variety of needs. These library needs include items such as supplying best sellers; providing pre-school story hours and special programs; supporting local schools; offering foreign-language books and serious literature; and providing community meeting space. Such a well-rounded library is seen as giving its community a choice of materials.

The special purpose library is seen as only partially meeting the needs of its local community. Many librarians fear that users will not be motivated to go beyond the local library unit and will lose exposure to the other materials and services that are available.

Advocates of special purpose libraries (9% of respondents) see it as an economic measure because of shrinking resources and as a means of responding to the rapid growth of information. Some see special purpose libraries as providing only a single service -- whether it is a juvenile collection alone or a business collection alone. Others believe that special purpose libraries should have the traditional general collection of popular books, school support materials and basic research materials plus a special emphasis which would be selected based on community interest and system-wide needs.

14. What Are the Most Important Problems Facing the Branch Library?

Insufficient staff, staff morale, inadequate book collections and inadequate hours of operation were seen as the four most important problems facing the library today. These findings correlate very closely with librarian perception of which additional services would most increase public use and/or satisfaction with branch libraries.

The relative importance of the various factors differed most noticeably by library system rather than by community district income or circulation. For example, librarians in both the Brooklyn and the New York systems found inadequate hours of operation, inadequate book collections and the lack of modern technology to be far more significant problems than did librarians in Queens. Librarians in Queens, on the other hand, felt staff security and problem patrons were more significant problems than their peers did.

Table 1.17 illustrates the rank ordering for all three systems and for the City as a whole. Three write-in answers, not noted in the table, were also often listed. These were inadequate funds, low salaries and lack of qualified staff.

Table 1.17

MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS FACING THE LIBRARY TODAY

By Library System
(Rank Order)

Factor	Brooklyn	Queens	New York	City-wide
Inadequate information on availability of library services	9	6	9	9
Insufficient staff	1	1	1	1
Staff Morale	3	2	4	2
Staff security: fear of traveling or working in certain areas	7	3	8	6
"Problem" patrons who make the library unsafe or unpleasant	8	4	7	7
Inadequate facilities	10	7	9	10
The lack of modern technology	6	12	5	8
Inadquate hours of operation	4	8	2	4
Too many branches	11	10	12	11
Inadequate book collections	2	9	3	3
Inadequate in-library programming	12	13	13	13
Inability to meet the information needs of users	5	5	6	5
Need for additional bilingual staff and materials	12	11	11	12

Notes: 1. The rankings are based on an analysis of survey responses.
2. The two factors receiving the same point score were assigned the same rank.

Source: Nova mail questionnaire to branch librarians.

Summing Up: Branch Librarian Responses

Branch librarian responses showed a consistent pattern throughout the questionnaire. Librarians seemed most concerned with providing the traditional general collection of well-rounded reading materials, school support materials and basic research materials. Assistance by a well-trained librarian was seen as an essential component of these services. Also seen as vitally important was access to library services through a network of neighborhood branches and

additional hours of operation (particularly during weekdays and weekends). Services were seen as being tailored to local community needs by placing special emphasis on one or another factor. If utilization was still below expectations, more effective outreach was believed to be the best response.

Librarians did not seem to view the future direction and/or organization of the library system as being significantly different from the present. Nor did they seem to view some of the less basic services such as the lending of films and records, bilingual staff and materials, or in-library programming as important determinants of library use -- at least under the difficult financial constraints to which their operations are subject.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY BOARD RESPONSES

The responses submitted by the community boards are summarized below, arrayed in the order of items in the survey questionnaire distributed to the boards.

1. Satisfaction with Library Services

Community boards expressed a mixed degree of satisfaction with library services. More than half of the respondents (53%) were dissatisfied with library services. Limited service hours and inadequate book collections were the two major sources of dissatisfaction. These two factors were also noted as problems by many boards that expressed general satisfaction with current library services (47% of respondents).

2. Relative Importance of Various Library Services

School assignments and leisure-time reading were seen as the two most important services offered by branch libraries. These factors were also identified by branch librarians as being the most common reasons for library use. The relative importance assigned to each factor differed: community boards felt providing materials for school assignments was the single most important service while librarians chose leisure-time reading as the most important reason for library use.

3. What Do Community Boards Like Most About Branch Libraries?

The availability of circulating and reference materials and the ability to use these materials without purchasing them were the two factors community boards liked best about branch libraries. These items were followed respectively by reference help and branch accessibility.

4. Reasons for Non-Use of Branch Libraries

Community boards saw the most important reasons for non-use of branch libraries as:

- Insufficient service hours
- People don't know about the library
- Inconvenient service hours
- People don't read
- Inconvenient service days

Community boards tended to view insufficient and inconvenient service hours and days as a greater deterrent to library usage than did branch librarians who rated only insufficient service hours as one of the five principal reasons for non-use of branch libraries.

5. Recommended Additional Services

More weekend, weekday and evening hours of service were cited as the three actions which would most increase the public's use and/or satisfaction with branch libraries. Once again, boards saw hours of operation as a more critical component of library use than did branch librarians who ranked more books for adults and more staff as the two best ways to increase public use and satisfaction. (Community boards ranked these two factors fifth and fourth respectively.)

6. Which Services Are Community Boards Willing to Give Up?

As was found in the branch librarian survey, the services the boards were most willing to give up were the same as those they were least likely to add. These included:

- Reductions in the purchase and lending of films, records and other non-print materials.
- Reductions in special collections in specific subject areas.
- Reductions in materials and library programs for the foreign born.
- Reductions in in-library programming.

7. Statements About Branch libraries

Community boards were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about branch libraries. Those boards responding agreed unanimously that branch libraries should provide research, reference and community information services. By a narrow margin, boards felt it was not the responsibility of branch libraries to teach people either to read or to use computers. Community boards felt strongly that branch libraries were a valuable education service for both children and adults and were not primarily intended to serve children.

8. Library Service Hours

Additional service hours on Saturdays and on weekday evenings were recommended by community boards if library service hours could be revised to better meet community needs. Increased service hours during these time periods were seen as preferable to increases in either weekday or Sunday hours of operation.

9. Should Branch Libraries Be Consolidated?

Nearly all of the responses (93%) indicated opposition to branch consolidation, the closing of some neighborhood branches while expanding the hours and services offered at other nearby branches. Most boards felt that consolidation would result in a loss of library services for children, the elderly and the poor, groups seen as being either unable or unwilling to take advantage of improved services at more distant branches. One board captured the feelings of many others by stating "a community library with less than desirable services is better than one which will not be available in the community".

10. What Are the Most Important Problems Facing the Branch Library?

Inadequate hours of operation, insufficient staff and inadequate book collections were seen as the three most important problems facing the library today. Again, boards viewed inadequate hours of operation as a more serious problem than did branch librarians (who ranked this factor fourth).

SUMMARY OF CITY COUNCILMEMBER RESPONSES

The responses submitted by the one-fourth of the City Councilmembers who replied to the survey are summarized below, arrayed in the order of items in the survey.

1. Satisfaction with Library Services

City Councilmembers expressed a mixed degree of satisfaction with library services. More than half of the respondents (55%) were dissatisfied with library services. Lack of service hours and lack of funds for new and replacement books were the most often mentioned problems.

2. Statements About Branch Libraries

City Councilmembers were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about branch libraries. Those Councilmembers responding agreed that branch libraries were a valuable educational service for both children and adults and were not primarily intended to serve children. They also felt that libraries should offer a mix of light reading books and classical literature. Many Councilmembers also thought that branch libraries should provide more materials tailored to the needs and interests of minorities, ethnic groups and bilingual users.

3. Recommended Additional Services

More evening, weekend and weekday hours of service were cited as the three actions which would most increase the public's use and/or satisfaction with branch libraries. Other suggested service changes received scant support.

4. Which Services Are Councilmembers Willing to Give Up?

Most Councilmembers were unwilling to reduce any current service. The most common response was a write-in comment: none. These Councilmembers explained that current funding was too limited for them to support any further reductions.

5. Should Branch Libraries Be Consolidated?

All of the respondents (100%) opposed branch consolidation, the closing of some neighborhood branches while expanding the hours and services offered at other nearby branches.

6. Should All-Purpose Libraries Be Replaced by Special Purpose Libraries?

Nearly three-quarters of the respondents (73%) believed that special purpose libraries could not replace the all-purpose neighborhood library. One Councilmember supported the concept of special purposes libraries while two others required more information before reaching an opinion.

Summing Up: Responses to the Survey

For the most part branch librarians throughout the city and those community boards and City Councilmembers who responded to the survey were in broad agreement on certain key features of library operations:

- They expressed very strong support for continuation of an extensive system of neighborhood-serving, "basic-service" branches. Very little support was evidenced for consolidation or any form of specialized function.

- More hours of service was a common refrain, but was more strongly expressed by community and elected representatives than by librarians, who are more intimately aware of how thinly their resources have been stretched.

We believe that these expressions of concern and commitment provide a useful underpinning for the subsequent part of this report which examines options for change available to New York City's public libraries.

PART TWO: OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

This part of the report contains five sections, each focused on a separate aspect of the library systems. In each section, an effort is made to delineate opportunities for change that would improve library services and/or save city tax levy funds. The sections are not necessarily parallel, either in presentation or in potential importance. What they have in common is their orientation to potential change in library performance and operations.

The five sections cover the following subjects:

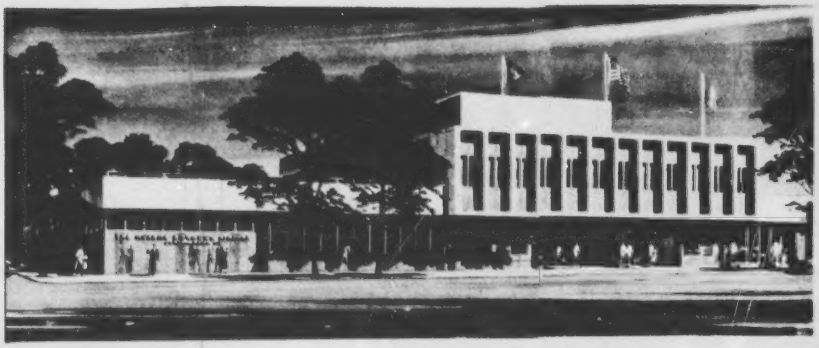
2.1 Trade-Offs. This examines some central issues of possible change in library services: the possible trade-off in cost and quality of service available from changes in the number of branches and hours of service.

2.2 Restructuring. This looks at the possible costs and benefits of major structural changes in the library systems, including consolidation into a single unit or further decentralization into five borough-level units. It also examines whether consolidation of school libraries with the public branch service is feasible or desirable.

2.3 Finances. This examines several significant aspects of financial support of the branch libraries.

2.4 Mission, Performance Measurement and Budgeting. This suggests an overall mission statement for the libraries and how such a mission definition can be linked to improvements in performance measurement and budgeting.

2.5 Further Options. This final section reviews some of the additional options for change examined during the study.



2.1 THE TRADE-OFF BETWEEN HOURS OF SERVICE AND NUMBER OF BRANCHES

This section of the report addresses some of the most central issues of the library study:

- Do New York's library systems have too many branches, either overall or in selected areas of the City?
- Could selective closing and/or consolidation of exisiting branches be accomplished while maintaining the existing level of service at reduced cost or could such action produce better library service at current expenditure levels?
- Are there significant problems with the current pattern of distribution of hours of service among the branches of the branches of the three library systems?

These are complex issues. In part, the complexity arises from the size and varied character of the three systems and of the diverse populations they seek to serve. To some extent, the precision of answers that can be given is limited by the information available (which itself varies from system to system). A further limiting factor is that there are significant non-measured, and possibly non-measurable factors involved, such as how different communities will respond to change in service patterns (e.g., number of hours or branch location). Despite these limitations, however, we believe that the information and analysis presented in this memorandum provides a useful basis for City-library consideration of future policies to adopt in this critical area.

The section is divided into three main parts:

- The first part addresses the branch issue. It looks at the existing pattern of branches in the City and compares it to the situation in other cities in the state and nation. It also presents criteria applicable to decisions on which branches could be closed with least effect on service levels, and identifies the branches that would be targeted under these criteria. It also estimates the dollar savings and service hours by branches.
- The second part of the section focuses on service hour patterns in terms of trends over time and how the three systems have allocated service hours by branches.
- The final sub-section describes options available to the City and the library systems in deciding whether to alter the branch and service hour pattern.

LIBRARY BRANCH ANALYSIS

As noted in Part One of this report, the development of the pattern of distribution of the City's branch libraries was heavily influenced as long ago as 1901 by Andrew Carnegie's gift of many branch buildings. In more recent times the Githens and Munn study of 1945 confirmed a close spacing pattern under which branches were scheduled to be about one mile apart. Actual distribution of branches in the four largest boroughs closely conforms to this pattern -- at least on average. In the four boroughs (exclusive of still-growing Staten Island) there is an average service area of 1.33 square miles per branch and the mean branch-to-branch distance is 1.3 miles or about 6,900 feet.

The next parts of this section look at New York City's branch library distribution pattern in terms of two key features -- population served per branch and spacing of branches. The objective is to see whether the City, or portions of it, have what might be defined as too many branches and/or if there are situations in which branches are unreasonably close to one another.

Branch Density

Population density varies widely within the five boroughs, as shown in Table 2.1. The range is by a factor of ten, from the 6,000 persons per square mile in Staten Island to the 62,000 persons per square mile in Manhattan.

There is also a variation in the average number of persons served per branch, as shown in Table 2.2. This range, however, is much smaller, varying only from the 29,300 persons per branch in Staten Island to the 38,000 persons per branch in Manhattan. In effect, New York City appears to have followed a fairly consistent pattern of allocating one branch library for each 35,000 residents with a variation of plus or minus 5,000 persons per branch.

A more detailed view of the density situation is presented in Table 2.3. This shows how population served per branch varies within each of the four larger boroughs (excluding Staten Island). The basis for determining population served is a distribution of census tracts defined by each of the library systems as constituting the "market area" of each branch.* This is not a wholly satisfactory "market area" division because the census tract is a fairly large unit, portions of which can be served by more than a single branch; realistically, however, it is probably as good as one can get in such an allocation.

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* Where library system "market area" definitions did not cover all tracts, Nova allocated the unserved tracts, generally to the nearest branch. Nova also allocated the population of tracts said to be served by more than one branch to the branch that served the majority of tract residents.

Table 2.1

POPULATION DENSITY BY BOROUGH, 1980

Borough	Population, 1980 (000's)	Land Area (Square Miles)	Density (000's Persons/Square Mile)
Bronx	1,169	42.5	27.5
Manhattan	1,428	23.0	62.1
Staten Island	352	55.8	6.3
Subtotal, NYPL	2,949	121.3	24.3
Brooklyn	2,231	72.8	30.6
Queens	1,891	109.6	17.3
Total City	7,072	303.7	23.3

Table 2.2

BRANCH DENSITY BY BOROUGH, 1980

Borough	Number of Branches	Population, 1980 (000's)	Density (000's of Persons/Branch)
Bronx	34	1,169	34.4
Manhattan	37	1,428	38.6
Staten Island	12	352	29.3
Subtotal, NYPL	83	2,949	35.5
Brooklyn	59	2,231	37.8
Queens	59	1,891	32.1
Total City	201	7,072	35.2

Table 2.3

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION SERVED PER BRANCH

(Data in number of branches in each population category)

Population Served	Bronx	Manhattan	Subtotal NYPL*	Brooklyn	Queens	City Total
Under 20,000	8	5	13	9	10	32
20-29,999	6	6	12	24	23	59
30-39,999	7	8	15	19	14	48
40-49,999	9	5	14	7	4	25
50,000 and Over	4	10	14	1	8	23
Total	34	34	68	60	59	187

* Excludes Staten Island where census tracts tend to be too large in area for useful analysis.

Note: Not all branches were assigned service areas in Manhattan.

Source: Nova analysis, based on Library System definitions and 1980 Census Tract data.

The "modal" population served per branch is in the 30-39,999 range for NYPL's Manhattan and Bronx areas combined; for Brooklyn and Queens the mode falls in the 20-29,000 population range (as it does for branches in all four boroughs taken together). Only Manhattan and Queens have a sizeable number of branches serving over 50,000 persons each. About one branch in six in the four boroughs serves less than 20,000 residents.

Comparing New York and Other Cities

The large city comparisons presented in Part One of this report showed that, in terms of average population served per branch, the three New York City systems rank about in the middle of the nine largest city library systems for which we were able to obtain data on the number of branches. Of the large cities, Baltimore and San Diego have the lowest population per branch, while Philadelphia is very close to the New York figures. Chicago and Los Angeles have somewhat higher levels of population per branch (or fewer branches per hundred thousand residents). Detroit has a much higher level of population per branch than New York.

On a weighted average basis (excluding the three New York systems) the average persons per branch for the seven comparison large urban systems is 43,300. This is almost one-fifth higher than the New York City average of 35,350 persons per branch.

One other factor worth noting with respect to branch density is that New York City's library systems tend to have branches much more closely spaced than is the case in most of the other large cities. This appears to be a by-product of the City's policy decisions on population served per branch and its much higher density (measured in persons per square mile) than is the case in other American cities. Thus, if one were to set a standard in terms of square miles served per branch library, all three of New York's systems would show up as having more branches per square mile than do other large cities.

Physical Distance Between Branches

There are no agreed-on rules for how far a patron can be expected to travel to reach a branch library. In low density rural areas where virtually all travel is by private motor vehicle, branches are typically miles apart. Bookmobiles do something to serve youth, the elderly and others who can't travel by car in such areas but accessibility problems are still great. The only parts of New York City where it is realistic to expect much of the population to travel by car are the middle and southern portions of Staten Island, the eastern third of Queens and perhaps some outer portions of the Bronx and Brooklyn. Elsewhere in the City travel to libraries is typically by foot or by bus or subway.

Except in Staten Island, where there are still substantial underdeveloped areas, New York City has been covered by a network of

branch libraries, typically spaced so that they are one-half to at most two miles apart. It is very difficult (again, except in Staten Island) to find areas where a branch library is over one mile -- or about 20 minutes walking time for healthy adults -- from any residence. While New York may not have the most closely spaced library network in the nation (Baltimore appears to take that prize) it does rank among the leaders in branch accessibility.

On the other hand, concern has been expressed -- especially by the Office of Management and Budget -- that some New York City library branches are too close to one another for efficiency. To examine this issue, Nova has looked at library spacing in the four larger boroughs (excluding Staten Island) to see how close the closest branches are to one another. For this analysis we selected a branch-to-branch distance of 4,000 feet, or about three-quarters of a mile, as constituting "close" relationships in the boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. For Manhattan, with its much higher densities, we reduced this "close" definition to 3,000 feet, a little over half a mile.

The "close" library relationships we identified are as follows:

The Bronx. Two Bronx branch libraries, Sedgwick and Belmont, are each located within 4,000 feet of three other branches. Four branches (Grand Concourse, Tremont, Fordham and Allerton) are within 4,000 feet of two other branches. Apart from these situations, 16 other Bronx branches are within 4,000 feet of one other branch. The three- and two-branch relationships are shown in Table 2.4.

Manhattan. No Manhattan branches are within 3,000 feet of three other branches. However three are within 3,000 feet of two other branches: Tompkins Square, Jefferson Market and Webster. Another 13 branches are within 3,000 feet of one other branch.*

Brooklyn. One Brooklyn branch (Bedford) is within 4,000 feet of three others. Five other Brooklyn branches are within the same distance of two other branches.

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* If Manhattan is considered in terms of the same 4,000 foot standard for proximity used for the outer boroughs, a much larger number of branches is identified as being close to one another: nine branches are within 4,000 feet of one other branch; eight branches are that close to two other branches; ten are that close to three other branches; and three are that close to four other branches. The three branches each of which is within 4,000 feet of four other branches are Aguilar, Harlem and Ottendorfer.

Queens. While there are about half a dozen instances where two Queens branches are within 4,000 feet of one another, in only one instance is a facility within 4,000 feet of two other branches. This is the case with respect to the Langston Hughes community facility, a specialized outreach facility in the Corona-East Elmhurst area. This facility, which the Queens Borough library system does not consider a regular branch, is within 4,000 feet of both the Corona and East Elmhurst branches.

Does proximity of other branches affect branch utilization? In an effort to get at least an approximate answer to this question Nova looked at the levels of circulation* in those branches that were located close to two or three other branches. (Obviously, proximity is not the only variable involved that influences circulation -- others probably include quality and availability of branch service, family incomes, age distribution, etc.; but just as obviously, proximity could well act to reduce circulation levels if locations where branches are closely spaced are truly "over-branched".) Table 2.5 presents data on circulation for each of the branches identified in Table 2.4 as being close to two or three other branches in terms of three measures: total circulation; circulation per capita and -- for the NYPL branches only, where we have the data available -- cost per unit of circulation. Data in the table suggests that there is no clear relationship between the proximity of a branch to other branches and the other variables that measure utilization, effectiveness and efficiency:

- Bronx. The five Bronx "close" branches for which data is available include three with lower than average circulation and two with higher than average circulation. Two have lower than average circulation per capita and three have higher "effectiveness". Only one ranks better than average on the "efficiency" measure of cost per unit of circulation.**

- Manhattan. Two of the three "close" Manhattan branches have lower than average circulation while one (Jefferson Market) is well above average. All rank close to or above the average circulation per capita for the borough. Two are more "efficient" than average while one is worse than average on the cost per circulation indicator.

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* Nova recognizes that circulation is not the only measure of library utilization but it is the single best measure available and the one that appears most uniformly measured by the three city systems.

** The use of the terms "efficiency" and "effectiveness" in this section is defined in the following pages.

Table 2.4

CLOSE LOCATION RELATIONSHIPS AMONG LIBRARY BRANCHES

Borough	Branch	Other Branches Within 4,000* Feet (0.75 Mile)
Bronx	Sedgwick	High Bridge, Grand Concourse, Fort Washington (Man.)
	Belmont	Tremont, West Farms, Fordham
	Grand Concourse	Sedgwick, Tremont
	Tremont	Grand Concourse, Belmont
	Fordham	Belmont, Jerome Park
	Allerton	Eastchester, Van Nest
Manhattan	Tompkins Square	Hamilton Fish, Ottendorfer
	Jefferson Market	Hudson Park, Muhlenberg
	Webster	Yorkville, 67th Street
Brooklyn	Bedford	Clinton Hill, Brower Park, Marcy
	Dorchester	Kensington, Windsor Terrace
	Stone Avenue	Brownsville, East Flatbush
	Pacific	Clinton Hill, Walt Whitman
	Clinton Hill	Pacific, Bedford
	Leonard	Bushwick, Williamsburg
Queens	Langston Hughes	Corona, East Elmhurst

* Except in Manhattan, where the distance is 3,000 feet.

Table 2.5

SELECTED CIRCULATION DATA FOR CLOSELY SPACED BRANCHES

Borough	Branch*	Circulation (000's)	Circulation Per Capita	Branch Operating Cost per Unit of Circulation
Bronx	Sedgwick(3)	12.8	0.68	$6.11
	Belmont(3)	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Grand Concourse(2)	37.4	0.83	5.56
	Tremont(2)	27.4	1.80	4.51
	Fordham(2)	137.0	2.06	4.34
	Allerton(2)	86.0	1.94	3.00
Borough Average		61.0	1.78	3.30
Manhattan	Tompkins Square(2)	48.7	1.71	3.64
	Jefferson Market(2)	230.0	3.14	1.86
	Webster(2)	61.7	2.13	1.84
Borough Average		96.1	2.29	2.12
Brooklyn	Bedford(3)	28.3	1.21	N/A
	Dorchester(2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Stone Avenue(2)	35.8	1.12	N/A
	Pacific(2)	48.5	1.80	N/A
	Clinton Hill(2)	62.0	2.13	N/A
	Leonard(2)	43.2	2.06	N/A
Borough Average		108.7	2.83	N/A

* Number in parentheses is number of nearby branches.

N/A = Not available. Cost per branch data not available for Brooklyn and Queens; Belmont branch open too recently for reliable data. Dorchester is not yet open.

- Brooklyn. All five of the "close" Brooklyn branches for which circulation data is available (Dorchester is a new facility and does not yet have such data) are below average in circulation and in circulation per capita.

- Queens. The only Queens unit which is close to at least two other library branches is the Langston Hughes community facility, an atypical branch whose focus is not primarily on circulation.

It may also be useful to note that there are only three cases (the Sedgwick and Tremont branches in the Bronx and the Bedford branch in Brooklyn) where branches appear both in the list of branches in close geographic proximity to at least two other branches and also on a list of very low circulation branches. The Sedgwick and Tremont branches are both in the same part of the borough (both are in the South Bronx and both are just north of the Cross-Bronx Expressway). They are separated from one another by a distance of a little over a mile; the Grand Concourse branch lies about half way between them. Brooklyn's Bedford branch is in the northern part of that borough, near other low-circulation branches.

On the basis of this analysis it appears that closeness of branches to one another does not -- by itself -- necessarily detract from the level of use. While there are some cases of low circulation in the list of "close branches, it seems very difficult to attribute low circulation solely to over-branching.

Summing Up: Branch Density and Proximity

On the basis of the analysis presented above, Nova concludes that there is little basis for belief that New York City's library systems contain too many branches or that -- except in isolated instances -- that these branches are located too close to one another. The principal bases for these conclusions are:

- New York's library systems rank about in the middle of major comparable urban library systems in terms of branch density and are well above the densities in other parts of this state.

- Most New York branches are about one mile from other branches and in only a relatively modest number of cases are branches closer than three-fourths of a mile apart (except in high-density Manhattan).

- Where branches are close to other branches, there is no clearly apparent effect on total circulation, circulation per capita or cost per unit of circulation. The reasons for low branch utilization do not appear to lie primarily in branch proximity.

There is, however, one small but disturbing trend apparent in recent branch construction decisions: two of the most recent branches (Belmont in the Bronx and Dorchester in Brooklyn) are both located in close proximity to several other existing branches. While Nova recognizes that there may have been strong reasons to service special populations in these cases, it is hard to see how they could have been justified on the basis of the standards for branch location generally followed by the city in the past.

Identification of Problem Branches

In Nova's view, there are four principal measures that are appropriate to assess the degree to which a branch library is not meeting reasonable standards for service delivery:

- Use. The degree to which a branch is actually used is a direct reflection of its importance to the system and to the residents it serves. Circulation is the best single measure of use and the one for which we have the most reliable and comparable figures even though, as already noted, it is not the only possible measure of use.

- Effectiveness. The degree to which a branch actually succeeds in reaching the population it serves is a good measure of its effectiveness; low circulation, for example, may only be a reflection of the small number of people in a branch's service area. To obtain a measure of effectiveness, Nova calculated the number of people living in each branch's primary service area (as defined by each of the systems) from 1980 census tract data. This number was then divided into circulation to obtain circulation per capita. The measure is not perfect: as already noted, circulation is a good but not perfect measure of use; also, there are no barriers to a person using a library even if he or she lives outside its primary service area. Despite these limitations, however, we feel that circulation per capita is a good relative measure of branch effectiveness.

- Efficiency. The level of branch use achieved for each dollar of expenditure would be a good measure of branch efficiency in delivering service. There are constraints on obtaining data for such a measure, primarily because only NYPL has accurate data on the cost of operating each of its branches and also because some branches may be inherently inefficient (because of age, obsolescence or design). To develop a surrogate measure of efficiency that could be applied with comparable validity to all three systems, Nova used the number of personnel assigned to each branch (professional and clerical) as a measure of cost. Personnel per unit of circulation thus became the measure of branch efficiency.

- Proximity. To define situations in which branches were close to other branches, the 4,000 foot distance (3,000 feet in Manhattan) criterion developed earlier in this section was used. Only those situations in which a branch was close by this definition to at least two other branches were defined as ones of high proximity.

Nova then calculated the values for these four measures for every branch (exclusive of centralized or specialized facilities that do not operate as general service branches) in the four largest boroughs of the City. Staten Island was excluded for the purposes of this analysis because its population is still growing rapidly.

Table 2.6 presents a summary frequency distribution of the four variables by number of branches in each borough. Several aspects of the distribution are worthy of comment:

- Use per branch varies widely, but the modal circulation group in each of the four boroughs is the same: over 45,000 items per year. Only 28% of the branches fall below this level.

- Effectiveness varies even more widely, with Brooklyn and Queens having modal groups in the highest range (over three items circulated per person served per year). Branches in the Bronx and Manhattan tend to rank measurably lower in this regard.

- Efficiency varies over a considerable range, but all four boroughs tend to have more branches in the same range (5.0 to 9.9 employees per 100,000 items per year) than in any other category. Of the four criteria, this one tends to be the most susceptible to influence by administrative action; by assigning fewer people to a branch, a library executive can increase its efficiency -- provided that circulation does not then fall off.*

- Close proximity is not a widespread problem. Only 16 out of the 183 branches (9%) are close to two or more other branches.

Ranking the Branches

In order to develop a summary measure that integrated these four criteria, Nova assigned point scores to each measure. Of necessity, there is a certain degree of arbitrariness in these point scores, but it is believed that overall they provide a good relative measure. However, the reader is cautioned against placing great weight on small differences in scores between any two or more branches.

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* The NYPL data in Table 2.6 are not as reliable as those for the other systems because of varying patterns in personnel assignment.

Table 2.6

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF BRANCHES
IN TERMS OF FOUR CRITERIA, BY BOROUGH

(In Number of Branches)

A. USE: Circulation in Items Per Year

Range	Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Under 15,000	1	2	0	1	4
15-29,999	8	6	5	6	25
30-44,999	4	2	10	6	22
45,000 and Over	20	22	42	44	128
N/A	1	0	1	2	4
Total	34	32	48	59	183

B. EFFECTIVENESS: Circulation in Items Per Year Divided by 1980 Population in Service Area

Range	Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Under 1.00	10	8	3	7	28
1-1.99	8	14	20	10	52
2-2.99	8	3	8	12	31
3.00 and over	7	7	26	28	68
N/A	1	0	1	2	4
Total	34	32	58	59	183

C. EFFICIENCY: Professional and Clerical Employees Per 100,000 Items of Circulation Per Year

Range	Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Under 5.0	0	3	6	2	11
5.0 to 9.9	11	16	36	41	104
10.0 to 14.9	10	3	13	9	35
15.0 to 19.9	7	2	2	1	12
Over 20.0	5	6	0	4	15
N/A	1	2	1	2	6
Total	34	32	58	59	183

D. PROXIMITY: Branches Within 4,000 Feet (3,000 in Manhattan) of Other Branches

Number Within Distance	Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Less Than Two	28	29	52	58	167
Two	4	3	5	1	13
Three or More	2	0	1	0	3
Total	34	32	58	59	183

Source: Nova calculations as described in text of report.

First, a total of 25 points was assigned to each of the measures, thus weighting them equally and setting a maximum of 100 points that could be assessed against any branch.

Second, within each measure, points were allocated in terms of the degree to which the branch ranked poorly on that measure (e.g., low use, effectiveness or efficiency or proximity to a number of other branches). The point scores were allocated as follows:

Measure	Points
1. CIRCULATION (USE)	
Under 15,000/year	25
15-29,999/year	20
30-44,999/year	10
Over 45,000/year	0
2. CIRCULATION PER CAPITA (EFFECTIVENESS)	
Under 1.000 item/per person/year	25
1.00 to 1.99	10
2.00 to 2.99	5
Over 3.00	0
3. EMPLOYEES PER 100,000 CIRCULATIONS (EFFICIENCY)	
Over 20.0 employees/1,000 items/year	25
15.0 to 20.0	20
10.0 to 14.9	10
Under 10.0	0
4. PROXIMITY TO ADJACENT BRANCHES	
Close to 3 other branches	25
Close to 2 other branches	20
Close to one or no other branches	0

Where data was not available (e.g., where the branch was too new to have any circulation data) a zero score was assigned on that criterion. The net result of the point assignment process was the calculation of a summary point score for each branch. A summary of the point score distribution is shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF POINT SCORES
(Number of Branches)

Score	Borough				
	Bronx	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Under 10	10	8	32	39	89
10-19	2	9	6	6	23
20-29	7	4	7	2	20
30-39	1	0	5	3	9
40-49	4	3	3	4	14
50-59	0	3	3	2	8
60-69	6	1	2	0	9
70-79	3	4	0	3	10
80-89	0	0	0	0	0
90 and Over	1	0	0	0	1
Total	34	32	58	59	183

Source: Nova calculations as described in text.

The twenty branches with scores over 60 (11% of all branches ranked) appear to be the ones to which the most serious attention should be devoted. Possible actions which might be appropriate in such cases include: closing; consolidation with nearby branches; or revisions in hours of service, staffing or other operating features.

The twenty branches which have combined point scores of 60 or more are listed below.

Borough	Branch	Score
BRONX (10 branches)	Francis Martin	60
	Grand Concourse	75
	High Bridge	70
	Melrose	60
	Morrisania	65
	Mott Haven	70
	Sedgwick	100
	Tremont	60
	West Farms	65
	Woodstock	65
MANHATTAN (5 branches)	Countee Cullen	70
	Hamilton Fish	70
	Harlem	60
	115th Street	70
	Washington Heights	70
BROOKLYN (2 branches)	Bedford	65
	Brower Park	65
QUEENS (3 branches)	Baisley Park	70
	Queensbridge	70
	South Jamaica	75

As can be noted, half of these high-scored branches are in a single borough, the Bronx. Another quarter are in Manhattan. Another potentially significant feature is that they tend to be concentrated in portions of these boroughs. All of the high-scored branches in the Bronx are in the South Bronx (below Fordham Road). All but one of the high-scored Manhattan branches are in the Harlem/North Harlem area; the other is in the Lower East Side. Both of Brooklyn's high-scored branches are in Central Brooklyn while two of the three high-scored Queens branches are in South Jamaica.

All but one of these 20 highest-score branches are in low income community districts, as defined by New York City's Community Development Agency. Nearly all service predominantly Black or Hispanic populations. In considering any action that should be taken with respect to these branches, very serious consideration must be given to the difficult conditions under which the populations served by them live and labor. Under no circumstances should the preceding identification of these branches be taken as a Nova recommendation that they are redundant and should be closed. Rather, this is an identification of branches and areas where current library services are clearly in trouble and in need of change. What is less clear is how City and library officials should respond to try to change this situation.

The Economics of Branch Closing

The Office of Management and Budget is concerned, among other things, with minimizing municipal expenditures. As part of this study, they have indicated their interest in estimating how much could be saved if the least utilized or most redundant branches were closed.

Nova's ability to analyze branch costs has been sharply limited by the availability of data. Branch by branch cost data is available on only an estimated basis for NYPL, as a byproduct or a detailed cost accounting analysis conducted by Mildred Benson of the NYPL staff. No such data is available for either Brooklyn or Queens. Therefore, this analysis must rely solely on NYPL materials.

NYPL's 1981 expense budget study allocated $25.6 million of the branch system's $29.9 million total budget among the three boroughs served by the system and to centralized functions; the $4.2 million of unallocated funds was primarily made up of $2.0 million in unfilled CETA positions and $1.3 million of intra-City transfers for heat, light and power provided through the Department of General Services.

For each of the borough branch systems the cost allocation analysis provided branch-by-branch detail on the categories listed below. The branch-level data excluded staff and building costs associated with central facilities (Mid-Manhattan, Lincoln Center, etc.) or centralized services.

A. Public Service Operations

- Salaries of professional and clerical staff
- Staff-related OTPS such as supplies, equipment, postage and telephone

B. Maintenance and Development of Collections

- Library materials
- Ordering, processing and cataloging

C. Maintenance and Security of Branch Buildings

- Salaries and salary-related costs
- Supplies, equipment and contractual services

D. Rent (for leased buildings only)

E. Executive Management, Administrative and Supporting Services (allocated on a pro-rata share basis)

Table 2.8 presents a summary of branch cost data by borough for the three systems. The $16.9 million total shown in the table as allocated to branches is two-thirds (66%) of the total allocable budget of $25.6 million.

Table 2.8

BRANCH SYSTEM COSTS, NYPL, FISCAL 1981
(in $000's)

Category	Borough			
	Bronx	Manhattan	Staten Island	3-Borough Total
A. Public Service Operations	$4,314	$4,175	$1,483	$ 9,972
B. Maintenance of Collections	1,337	1,315	488	3,140
C. Maintenance of Buildings	925	1,376	231	2,532
D. Rent	227	26	12	265
E. Executive Management, etc.	435	392	12	973
Total	7,238	7,284	2,360	16,882

Source: NYPL Expense Budget Study (amounts distributed to branches only)

The total cost of the branch operation can be further subdivided into costs directly associated with branch building operations, as contrasted to those more closely related to services. These appear to be divided as follows (figures are the percentage of the total $16.9 million cost of branch operations):

Category	Costs Primarily Associated with Building Operations	Costs Primarily Associated with Service Delivery
A. Public Service Operations	--	59.1%
B. Maintenance of Collections	18.6%	--
C. Maintenance of Buildings	15.0	--
D. Rent	1.6	--
E. Executive Management, etc.	--	5.8
Total	35.2%	64.9%

This analysis indicates that, within the two-thirds of total NYPL costs that are allocable to branch operations, a little over one-third (35%) is primarily associated with building operation rather than service delivery.* Thus, about one-fifth of the entire NYPL budget appears to be devoted to branch building operation. If this were true of all three New York branch systems, then about $12.4 million of the fiscal 1981 budget of the library systems was associated with branch building operations; to this must be added about another two to three million dollars for heat, light and power for a total of about $15 million for building-related activities. Overall, then, branch operations appear to account for about one-fourth of the total library budget.

In the NYPL system, there are 77 local branches (for which budget data is available). If the $6 million allocable to building operations (categories B, C and D) were divided equally among them, the average cost would be about $78,000 per branch. To this should be added the cost of DGS-provided heat, light and power of about $12,000 per branch building, or a total average annual operating cost of about $90,000 per structure (exclusive of service-related personnel and central overhead). Because branches vary widely in size, a range of $50,000 to $100,000 seems to be appropriate; in light of the fact that the branches that seem most likely to be candidates for closing are generally smaller than average, the lower side of this range is most likely to describe the savings that could be achieved.

This estimate provides a useful rough measure of the savings that could be made by closing branch libraries. It is believed to be roughly applicable to the Queens and Brooklyn systems as well -- although in reality only a careful branch-by-branch analysis could provide accurate data on how much would be saved through any specific closing.

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* NYPL's own analysis of this data leads them to conclude that only about 21% of the typical branch's operating costs are associated with building operations as opposed to service delivery.

Table 2.9

ANNUAL HOURS OF SERVICE,
ALL LIBRARY FACILITIES, IN SELECTED YEARS

Branch System	Fiscal Years 1971	1977	1981	Percent of Total Hours 1981
NYPL	163,852 (1)	93,909	96,794	33.9%
Brooklyn	136,656 (2)	79,472	86,472	30.2
Queens	117,905	84,082	102,598	35.9
Total	418,413	257,463	285,816	100.0%

WITH FISCAL 1971 AS A BASE

Branch System	Fiscal Years 1971	1977	1981
NYPL	100.0 (1)	57.3	59.1
Brooklyn	100.0 (2)	58.2	63.2
Queens	100.0	71.3	87.0
Total	100.0	61.5	68.3

Notes: (1) Data based on schedule in July, 1971.
(2) Data for fiscal 1974-75.
(3) Brooklyn figures and NYPL for 1970-71 not adjusted for seasonal changes.

Sources: Reports of the library systems.

SERVICE HOURS ANALYSIS

During the depression years of the 1930's most branch libraries were open every day for periods of up to 12 hours. Those were years in which all-time circulation records were set in New York's library systems. Since then, continuing cutbacks have led to reduced hours for most branches. Few are open for as much as eight hours a day, many are closed on Saturday, and Sunday service is limited to a select few facilities. Library adaptation to restricted budgets and to declining circulation at some branches has taken the form of reductions in hours of service, rather than elimination of entire branches. Indeed, the number of branches in all three systems has expanded since 1975, with the greatest increases occurring in Queens.

To help put the recent pattern of service hour changes in context, Table 2.9 summarizes total hours of service by system over the past decade. It includes data on branches plus central libraries and specialized facilities (such as bookmobiles) to the extent that these are recorded separately by the three systems.

The units in the table are facility-hours of service: one facility-hour equals one hour during which a branch or central facility is open to the public. Thus, the data does not take into account variations in number of facilities; Brooklyn and Queens had about the same number -- roughly 60 each -- over this decade while NYPL had about 80 facilities.

The years were chosen on the following basis:

- Fiscal 1981 was the most recent year for which data was available.
- Fiscal 1977 is the first full year of impact of the fiscal crisis -- generally, a low point for many City services.
- Fiscal 1971 is a decade earlier than 1981 and is also what might be termed a "normal" year, at least in retrospect.

All three systems have been forced to cut back on their levels of service hours since 1971. At the depths of the fiscal crisis the cutback averaged nearly 40% and even by 1981 restoration of service hours still left the City nearly a third below the 1971 level. NYPL's crisis-period cutback appears to have been most severe, followed closely by Brooklyn. NYPL's post-1977 restoration also appears to have been the lowest, with Brooklyn a shade better off. Queens experienced the least service level cutback in the fiscal crisis and also achieved the greatest post-1977 restoration of hours.

Table 2.10

ANNUAL HOURS OF SERVICE BY BRANCHES, FISCAL 1981

Borough or System	Number of Branches	Total Hours of Service for Year	Average Per Branch
Bronx	33	34,969	1,060
Manhattan	33	37,583	1,139
Staten Island	12	14,138	1,178
NYPL	78	86,690	1,111
Brooklyn	58	80,808	1,393
Queens	56	99,150	1,771
TOTAL	192	275,972	1,437

Note: Excludes central libraries, specialized libraries (e.g., ECRIC, PC, Library for the Blind) and bookmobiles.

Table 2.11

DISTRIBUTION OF BRANCHES BY ANNUAL HOURS OF SERVICE, FISCAL 1981

(Number of Branches)

	Hours of Service Per Year				
Borough or System	Under 1040	1040 to 1508	1560 to 2028	2080 and Over	Total
Bronx (1)	16	16	1	0	33
Manhattan (2)	10	21	1	1	33
Staten Island (3)	4	6	1	1	12
NYPL	30	43	3	2	78
Brooklyn (4)	1	34	19	4	58
Queens (5)	0	7	36	13	56
TOTAL	31	84	58	19	192
Hours Per Week (average)	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 and Over	

Notes: (1) Excludes Belmont, closed during the year; also excludes bookmobile.
(2) Excludes Mid-Manhattan, Lincoln Center, ECRIC, Library for the Blind and Picture Collection; includes Donnell.
(3) Excludes bookmobile; includes Huguenot Park and Prince's Bay and branches.
(4) Excludes central and business libraries.
(5) Excludes central library.

Table 2.10 presents fiscal 1981 data only for community-focused branches (exclusive of central and specialized facilities). As can be seen in this table, the three branch library systems exhibit somewhat different patterns in terms of hours of service at their local facilities. Queens provides the highest number of service hours (both in total per year and in hours per branch). Brooklyn is in second place in average hours per branch. The NYPL system generates the lowest amount of service per branch; however, the NYPL picture is complicated by the issue of its specialized facilities and bookmobiles.

Table 2.11 presents the same branch-level data in terms of a frequency distribution pattern which shows clearly the tendency of NYPL to operate more branches for fewer hours than the other two systems.

A recent study by the Office of the Comptroller* examined the relationship between hours of service and circulation levels. It found them closely correlated: "...the number of hours a branch is open is positively and significantly related to circulation and other measures of library usage." What was less clear from the Comptroller's study was which came first, declines in circulation or reductions in hours. Our conversations with library personnel lead us to the following tentative conclusions:

- The principal cause of overall reductions in service hours has been the level of funding available to the libraries.

- As hours of service are cut, circulation doesn't tend to drop as rapidly, but over time it tends to decline as users find their branch closed when they want to use it. Restoration of service levels, when it has occurred, encounters a similar time lapse before patrons take advantage of enhanced availability of a branch.

- Within each system there has tended to be an allocation of staff and service hours to branches in relation to their overall level of use, thus limiting the loss of service as much as is feasible. This, in turn, strengthens the correlation between service hours and circulation found by the Comptroller.

Because no branches have been closed since the city's fiscal crisis, service hours and staffing have been the basic method of response of the libraries to the fiscal pressures under which they have operated.

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* Utilization of Branch Libraries in New York City, Bureau of Performance Analysis, Office of the Comptroller, HS-03-81 (New York: March 25, 1981).

Table 2.12

ANALYSIS OF LOW CIRCULATION BRANCHES
NYPL, FISCAL 1981

Borough	Region	Branch	Circulation (000's)	Total Operating Cost ($000's)	Branch Maintenance Cost ($000's)	Total Cost Per Circulation ($/item)
BRONX	Northeast	Castle Hill*	24.1	$ 156.9	$ 83.1	$ 6.50
	Central	City Island	19.3	79.1	31.3	4.11
	Central	West Farms*	26.4	165.9	83.1	6.27
	South Central	High Bridge	25.5	138.9	66.0	5.45
	South Central	Sedgwick*	12.8	74.5	28.4	5.80
	South Central	Tremont	27.4	117.9	64.6	4.30
	South	Morrisania	23.4	143.9	77.1	6.16
	South	Mott Haven*	21.4	168.4	68.5	7.88
	South	Woodstock	21.8	156.0	66.2	7.15
	SUB-TOTAL	9 Branches	202.1	1,201.5	568.3	5.95
MANHATTAN	West Side	Columbus*	29.2	100.4	60.9	3.44
	Central Harlem	Countee Cullen	28.9	287.9	153.6	9.96
	Central Harlem	Harlem	13.9	100.9	64.8	7.26
	Central Harlem	Macombs Bridge	5.3	13.3	11.4	2.51
	Central Harlem	115th Street*	15.8	164.5	61.4	10.40
	Central Harlem	125th Street	16.1	116.0	58.3	7.25
	Lower East Side	Hamilton Fish*	26.5	146.4	54.6	5.52
	Upper West Side	Washington Heights*	25.0	160.7	64.6	6.43
	SUB-TOTAL	8 Branches	160.7	1,090.1	529.6	6.78
STATEN ISLAND	North Shore	Stapleton*	28.1	93.5	41.6	3.33
	South Shore	Huguenot	5.7	16.7	1.4	2.93
	South Shore	Prince's Bay	5.5	2.6	1.5	0.47
	South Shore	South Beach	23.2	26.5	4.7	1.15
	SUB-TOTAL	4 Branches	62.5	139.3	49.2	2.22
NYPL	TOTAL	21 Branches	425.3	2,430.9	1,147.1	5.72

Notes: (1) Total Operating Cost includes categories A-D as described in text.
(2) Branch Maintenance Cost includes categories B, C and D.

Source: Nova calculations, based on NYPL Expense Budget Study and Branch Services Data.

Service Implications of Branch Closings

It is possible to estimate at least the major implications for service hours of selected branch closings. In a separate analysis,* Nova reviewed the potential consequences in service hours of closing seven branch libraries in the NYPL system. The tentative candidates for closing were selected on the basis of three criteria:

- Low use (compared to all other branches in their borough or system).
- High cost (in relation to the degree to which they are used).
- Available alternatives for service to the community where the branch is located.

Utilizing these general principles and relying on cost and circulation data for fiscal 1981, Nova examined the branches in the NYPL system on a borough by borough basis. The technique used was the following:

- First, the lowest circulation branches were identified. Essentially, these consisted of the 21 branches with less than 30,000 items of circulation in the year.
- Second, these low circulation branches were examined in terms of total operating cost per item of circulation. This is, we believe, a good measure of the efficiency of a branch's operations.
- Third, the branches were reviewed in terms of location within NYPL's geographic regions. A criterion was set such that no more than one branch per region would be selected for closing. This is at least an approximation of a rule that no neighborhood be cut back excessively.
- Fourth, the final selection of candidates for closing was based on the highest cost per unit of circulation, subject to the one branch per region rule.

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2.12. It defines four possible branches for closing in the Bronx, another four in Manhattan and two in Staten Island (the ones marked with an asterisk). However, some additional considerations emerge when the group of ten possible candidates for closing are viewed as a group: both branches

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* Provided in memorandum form to the members of the Library Study Committee.

on Staten Island and one Manhattan branch (Columbus) have cost/circulation levels well below those of other low circulation branches excluded from consideration on the one branch per region rule. On this basis, one might properly exclude the two Staten Island branches and the Columbus branch in Manhattan from the list of candidates; if this were done, it would reduce the total list to seven branches, or just under one in ten of all NYPL branches.

The ten branches that meet the tentative set of conditions for consideration for closing would be:

Borough	Region	Branch
Bronx	Northeast	Castle Hill
	Central	West Farms
	South Central	Sedgwick
	South	Mott Haven
Manhattan	West Side	Columbus (?)
	Central Harlem	115th Street
	Lower East Side	Hamilton Fish
	Upper West Side	Washington Heights
Staten Island	North Shore	Stapleton (?)
	South Shore	South Beach (?)

There is no question that the method utilized -- and, we suspect, any method for selecting branches as possible candidates for closing -- has weaknesses. There are small differences in circulation and efficiency among many of the branches listed in Table 2.12, and these could change in order from year to year. Further, there are many grounds for arguing that some branches on the list (notably Columbus, Stapleton and South Beach) are low in circulation but relatively high in efficiency.* Further, even though care has been taken to avoid undue impact on any region, there is a disproportionate concentration of low circulation branches and therefore of possible candidates for closing in the low income neighborhoods served by NYPL. For all of these reasons this list should be considered illustrative, designed for analytic purposes only, and not a recommendation of the consultant.

What would be the fiscal impact of closing the seven highest cost, lowest efficiency branches out of this group of ten possible candidates? There would be two impacts, which can roughly be measured from the 1981 cost study:

- The savings in cost of operating these seven branch buildings would be $444,000 per year (as of 1981) plus an estimated $84,000 in heat, light and power costs

* These three also tend to be least costly of the ten in terms of dollars per hours of service. Out of the ten, only these three and Sedgwick cost less than $150 per hour; the other six range from $183 to $260/hour in operating cost.

- Another $593,000 in staff costs would become available for transfer to other branches. As of 1981, these funds supported 34.5 staff members (of whom five were CETA-financed) at $17,200 per person.

The impact on service hours in the rest of the NYPL system of closing these seven branches could be approximated as follows:

- First, the 5,082 branch-hours of service provided by the seven closed facilities would be lost (about 6% of total hours delivered by NYPL's branches). As of 1981, the seven branches each provided an average of 726 hours/year of public service, equal to an average of about 3 hours per day for a five-day week or 5 hours per day for a three-day week.

- Second, the 34.5 staff members would become available for transfer and could be used to provide extra hours of public service at the system's remaining branches. If one assumed that they could be used on the same basis as the branch system's total 528.5 employees, each would add an average of about 174 branch-hours of service per year. Together, they could generate about 6,005 additional hours of public service at other branches.

- Third, the non-staff savings obtained from closing the seven branches would be available to support additional staff. Staff and related OTPS costs at these seven branches cost an average of $17,200 per person in 1981. The $531,000 in savings could thus support up to 31 additional staff at other branches or about 5,394 branch-hours of service.

- In reality, the incremental hours of service at other branches would probably be somewhat less than is implied in the foregoing calculation because no provision has been made for extra maintenance, security, heating and other costs inevitably associated with extra hours of service.

Summing up, then, the results of closing the seven branches might look like this:

Hours of Service Lost	-5,082
Hours of Service Gained	+6,005 (Staff)
	+5,394 (Buildings)
Less:	
Extra Maintenance, security, etc.	- 500 (Estimate)
Net Hours Gained	+5,817

On balance, NYPL would gain an estimated 5,817 branch-hours of service, equivalent to an increase of about 7% in its total hours of service in 1981 in return for closing about 9% of its branches.

If the additional hours of service were largely concentrated in the regions where branches were closed, the result could be a fairly significant increase in service hours. For example, in the South Central Region of the Bronx there are six branches; of these, Sedgwick is on the list of tentative closings. The region's other five branches (excluding Sedgwick) were each open for an average of 957 hours per year in 1981. Closing Sedgwick would make possible an increase of about 16% in hours operated by the five remaining branches. On a weekly basis, this would amount to about 15 extra hours, the equivalent of about one more hour per day per branch (on a three day opening schedule).

Summing Up: The Trade-Off Between Branch Closing and Service Hours

The preceding analysis suggests answers to the second of the questions asked at the outset of this section: Could selective closing and/or consolidation of existing branches be accomplished while maintaining the existing level of service at reduced cost or could such action produce better library service at current expenditure levels? The answers, as Nova sees them, are:

- Yes, the existing level of service -- defined in terms of total branch-hours of service -- could be preserved while achieving savings on the order of $50,000 to $100,000 per branch closed if the staff of the closed branches is transferred to other, nearby branches. This answer does not mean that there would be no loss, especially as seen from the viewpoint of the communities now serviced by the closed branches; present and potential patrons in these communities would have to travel further to reach an alternative branch and some usage might be lost as a result. However, this loss would be counter-balanced, at least in part, by the added hours of service at the adjacent branches. What is harder to evaluate is the non-measurable sense of community loss attributable to the closing of "its branch".

- A positive answer can also be given to the second part of the question. If the savings made possible through

selective branch closings are wholly kept within the library budgets, additional hours of service can be provided at the nearby branches. This answer, however, also has the same qualification that some patrons would have to travel further to use the expanded hours at other branches. The same essentially political questions about community loss will also arise in this case.

Nova has tried to estimate the cost to patrons of a closed branch of additional travel time to another branch -- as was done in an econometric analysis of the NYPL system* -- and has concluded that it is an artificial and unreliable basis for assessing the cost of the community's loss when its branch is closed. Our conclusion is that these losses are not measurable in an analytic sense but are more appropriately a matter of community values, addressable in a political rather than an analytic sense.

With respect to the third question raised at the outset of this section -- are there significant problems with the current pattern of distribution of hours of service among the branches of the three library systems? -- it is Nova's conclusion that the administrators of the three systems have generally allocated their staffs and hours of service in ways that are well adapted to the level of use of their branches. This is borne out by two significant pieces of data:

- First, the Comptroller's analysis found that branch service hours and use levels are closely correlated. This is clear evidence of intelligent adaptation by the three systems to actual patterns of use.

- Second, our branch efficiency analysis (staff per 100,000 items of circulation) shows a relatively narrow range of variation among branches, with most branches in a relatively efficient band of values.

Table 2.13 tends to support these conclusions further. It shows the staffing level and the number of hours of service per year at the twenty branches that scored worst on the four-part criteria used earlier in this section compared to the average for the rest of the library systems in which they are located. The contrast is clearest for Queens and Brooklyn: in each case the high point score branches

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* An Economic View of Public Libraries, Malcolm Getz, Vanderbilt University and the National Bureau of Economic Research (Cambridge, Mass.: September 1, 1979). The Getz analysis of the potential costs and benefits of closing branches in the NYPL system comes out with positive benefit/cost ratios for closing 59 of the system's branches, based solely on a travel time trade-off. Nova finds the Getz analysis less than convincing.

have both significantly lower staffing and annual hours of service than the average for the rest of these systems. For NYPL, annual hours are lower than the rest-of-system average for all of the high-scoring branches in the Bronx and Manhattan with only two exceptions (Francis Martin in the Bronx and Countee Cullen in Manhattan). NYPL staff assignments are excluded from this table because they are not truly comparable to those in Brooklyn and Queens because of the NYPL practice of assigning staff part-time to the branches with the most limited hours of service.

Table 2.13

STAFFING AND HOURS OF SERVICE FOR
THE TWENTY HIGHEST-SCORING BRANCHES

Borough	Branch	Professional and Clerical Staff	Annual Hours of Service (1980-81)
BRONX	Francis Martin		1,256
	Grand Concourse		959
	High Bridge		915
	Melrose		905
	Morrisania		959
	Mott Haven		622
	Sedgwick		685
	Tremont		752
	West Farms		862
	Woodstock		657
Rest of Borough Average			1,113
MANHATTAN	Countee Cullen	10.0	1,253
	Hamilton Fish	6.0	801
	Harlem	4.5	585
	115th Street	8.0	704
	Washington Heights	7.5	771
Rest of Borough Average		7.0	1,223
BROOKLYN	Bedford	4.0	1,196
	Brower Park	4.0	1,092
Rest of Borough Average		7.0	1,402
QUEENS	Baisley Park	4.0	1,586
	Queensbridge	2.0	1,300
	South Jamaica	2.0	1,300
Rest of Borough Average		7.5	1,629

Source: Nova calculations based on data from Library Systems.

POLICY OPTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE TRADE-OFF

There are many policy options available to New York City and its library systems with respect to branch operations -- but none of the choices is without some difficulty and many will confront significant opposition within the community of library users, elected public officials and other concerned with the libraries. The options available will also differ along four key dimensions of concern:

- Cost. It is an open question as to whether the savings that could result from service changes such as branch closing should be retained by the library system to provide improved service at other locations or used to help close the City's recurrent budget gap. There is also a further question as to whether closing a branch should be considered to generate savings equal to the entire operating cost of the branch or only with respect to those aspects of operation that are clearly building-related.

- Service Level. New York City generally ranks close to other large cities in relation to the library service levels it now provides, but falls well below the standards set in adjoining suburban counties such as Nassau and Westchester. Closing a moderate number of branches, in and of itself, appears likely to do little to change these relationships.

- Accessibility. There are few situations in which New York's branch libraries are so close to one another that a branch could be closed without being missed. Further, local communities appear to have a degree of passion about the continued presence of "their" branch that has little relation to its actual level of use.

- Equity. The fact that the branches that score worst in Nova's analysis of use, effectiveness, efficiency and proximity are virtually all located in low income minority communities raises special concerns of equity that must be given careful consideration. While library branches in middle income areas tend to be used more heavily, many observers are convinced that the need for service is higher in low income neighborhoods where there are fewer alternatives available for the youth or adult who wants to take advantage of the library for personal improvement. New York City has a long and honorable tradition of concern for its underpriviledged that cannot be ignored in making decisions about the future location of branch libraries. In addition, a program of branch closing limited to minority areas could even be subject to legal challenges as a violation of civil rights under State or Federal law.

Balancing these factors is not easy, but it is necessary to any policy-maker who hopes to see his choices effectuated.

Major Policy Choices

Nova has identified three major choices with respect to branch and service hours that we believe are worthy of consideration.

Option 1. Close Branches to Reduce Expenditures. In the initial paragraphs of this section we identified twenty branches that rank poorly on important criteria of branch operation. Closing all of these -- an action likely to prove highly controversial because of their concentration in low-income areas -- would generate total annual savings (from building-related activities alone) of between $1 and $2 million per year, or about 1.7 to 3.3% of the gross annual library budget. A more realistic branch closing goal, which spread the impact more widely, would be limited to about ten branches in the entire City, with resulting savings on the order of $500,000 to $1 million per year.*

Such closing would then make possible transfers of staff in the closed branches to other facilities so that more hours of service could be provided. If only the costs associated with the transferred staff were retained by the libraries (with building-related costs treated as a budget savings) it is Nova's estimate that the additional hours made possible would be about equal to those lost through the closings; thus, there would be no net loss in total hours of service -- although there would be some added travel time for patrons of the closed branches, as well as the non-measurable factor of community sense of loss.

This option appears certain to face considerable political opposition because of three factors:

- Many, if not all, of the selective closings will be in low-income, minority communities.
- Most of the closings are likely to occur in one system (NYPL) and, within that system, in a single borough (the Bronx).
- Any branch library closing appears certain to face opposition from the community most immediately affected.

It is beyond the scope of Nova's capabilities -- or the contract for our services with the City -- for us to assess the relative weight that should be placed on the possible savings versus the opposition that such actions seem certain to engender.

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* Some additional savings would also be achieved in the capital budget because there would be a lower demand for branch renovation. This could add about 25% to 33% to the total annual savings.

Option 2. Consolidate Branches Without Budgetary Savings. If branch closing were treated as a matter solely of service improvement, without any effort to achieve budgetary savings to the City, less opposition would be likely (although much might be expected anyway). Consolidating branches within geographic regions of the City -- closing some and significantly expanding hours of service within others -- has a number of attractions. Perhaps a key to such action would be an effort to bring the remaining branches in such a region up to high standards of branch library quality, such as are typified by branches in Nassau or Westchester. The cost of achieving "suburban quality" might be prohibitive for more than a few branches in a region where one or more were closed, but it could be advanced as clear compensation for the closings. Overall, the benefit to the City would be a higher quality library system.

The most evident candidate areas for such treatment would be the South Bronx and Harlem; it might also be desirable in the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights areas of Brooklyn and the South Jamaica area in Queens.

Option 3. Branch Specialization. An alternative that has been considered in recent months in Philadelphia and San Francisco might also have possibilities for New York -- although it seems to offer only minimal if any prospects for budgetary savings. This is the differentiation of branch libraries into sharply specialized branch, regional and central facilities. It was proposed in Philadelphia as the major recommendation in a recent consultant study.*

Under the proposal, the Philadelphia library system would construct (or convert) four new regional centers which would be the focus of adult circulation; the central library would become a research facility; and the neighborhood branches would be focused primarily on serving youth (but not for school-related functions). Local branches would retain only a very limited adult-serving bookstock. The Philadelphia proposal -- which would not result in budgetary savings -- has proven quite controversial and has been opposed both by neighborhood groups and elected officials. A similar proposal by the same consultant in San Francisco has apparently met a similar fate.

New York's branch systems already have some degree of specialization in being, with the pattern most emphatic in NYPL. Queens and Brooklyn have some degree of regionalization but not nearly to the degree proposed for Philadelphia and with fewer specialized facilities than NYPL.

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* The Free Library and the Revitalization of Philadelphia: A Program for the 1980's, Lowell A. Martin et.al, January 1981.

These three options present, in Nova's view, the main choices for the City. There may be others that could be considered; one that has been suggested is the futuristic concept that branch libraries might be replaced by home computer connections via cable TV to a central data source, but as far as we can determine this is not only beyond the current state of technology but would be far most costly than current branch operations.

In Part Three of this report Nova presents its own conclusions and recommendations with respect to the issue of branch closing and how the city and library systems should proceed on this difficult issue of the trade-off between the number of branches and the level of service.

2.2 RESTRUCTURING THE LIBRARY SYSTEMS

This section examines three significant relationship issues. The first two concern the structure of the library system itself: whether the city should continue to maintain three separate systems and whether the three-borough New York Public Library should be divided into three separate systems. The final section examines relationships between the public libraries and school libraries.

The Structure of the Library System

The situation with three separate institutions providing public library services in New York City has no direct parallel in other city services. Most municipal services are provided on a city-wide basis by a centralized agency (such as the police or fire departments) which may have borough or district units but which maintain central jurisdiction over their activities. There are exceptions to this rule -- such as the Board of Education which operates both centrally and in conjunction with over thirty community school boards or the five elected District Attorneys -- but none is organized in the way the library systems are.

On the other hand, the origins of the three library systems date back to the turn of the century at about the time that the consolidation of the greater city took place. Thus, it is of very long standing, having been maintained for over eight decades.

As part of the current study of relationships between New York City and its three library systems, Nova agreed to review this long standing organizational pattern from two very different points of view:

- Should the three library systems be combined into a single city-wide system?
- Should the three-borough New York Public Library system be divided into three separate borough systems (parallel to those in Queens and Brooklyn) so that each of the five boroughs is treated in similar fashion?

In addressing these questions, this section first presents some background on why there are three separate systems. Next, it presents the various arguments that might be made for and against division of NYPL into three separate borough-oriented systems. Finally, suggestions are made for actions short of consolidation or decentralization that could help strengthen the current structure.

THE ISSUE OF CONSOLIDATION

As noted in Part One of this report, all three of New York's branch library systems have histories that are essentially as old as that of Greater New York City itself. Discussions of the possible benefits or disadvantages of consolidation of the three systems into one date back nearly as far.

Consolidation of the three library systems was actively discussed in 1901, at the time when Andrew Carnegie offered New York City funds to build 65 branch libraries (one for every 50,000 citizens) if, in return, the City government would provide sites and agree to maintain the buildings. Forty of the Carnegie branches were offered for Manhattan and the Bronx and twenty-five for Queens and Brooklyn. Carnegie made no stipulation that the libraries be run by a single entity and in subsequent discussions it became clear that there were a number of factors that militated against consolidation:

- In 1901, the Brooklyn and Queens libraries were viewed as public entities and their employees were civil servants. While NYPL -- the most highly developed system at the time -- was a private corporation, City officials were reluctant to lose their control over the two public systems to a private corporation. NYPL trustees were just as reluctant to give up their private status, especially with respect to the research libraries.

- Local patriots (especially in Brooklyn, which had accepted consolidation into New York City by only a tiny margin of votes) aroused fears of the Brooklyn and Queens systems being "swallowed up" by NYPL whose Manhattan orientation, they argued, would overlook the needs of the communities across the East River.

The result was an agreement that the three systems would go their separate ways. Subsequently, in the 1930's moves were made that resulted in uniform treatment of library employees within each of the three systems. However, no further action was taken toward consolidation of the three systems.

A serious study of the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation was made in 1957 by the trustees of the three library systems who retained Ralph R. Shaw to examine the situation. Shaw's report, entitled A Study of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Consolidation, came to a clear conclusion:

> "...that consolidation cannot be expected to result in economies, and that it would, in fact, cost more to provide the same quality and quantity of service if the three library systems were consolidated." (p. 98)

Shaw went into considerable detail in his examination of possible economies that consolidation might engender, but came up with essentially negative findings on each score, primarily because, as he noted:

> "Each of the library systems in New York City is now so much larger than substantially all other library systems in the country...Each of the three is, in fact, a highly consolidated system..." (p. 91)

In his search for possible economies, Shaw made a careful examination of the following areas:

- Book buying. Because each system already is large enough to receive the maximum available discount on its purchases, virtually no further savings would be generated by consolidation. At best, an additional discount of one percent on 20% of all orders might be gained -- but at considerable cost in grouping orders and subsequent distribution by the library systems rather than the publisher.

- Reduced duplication of purchases. Shaw found no economic advantage that could be attained in a consolidated system by virtue of being able to buy fewer copies of books.

- Binding. Each library system already was of a scale where it had to rely on more than a single outside bindery; thus, no savings were anticipated by consolidation.

- Cataloging. Consolidation of catalog operations would have involved major one-time expenditures (on the order of $3 million) and resulted in savings through cutting out duplication that Shaw estimated at one to one and a half man-years.

- Card production and card distribution were found to offer savings through decentralization rather than consolidation.

- Purchasing. An item-by-item study of cost of purchasing common items indicated little if any savings possible by shifting from purchase by the three systems to reliance on central City purchase contracts. In fact, the study appeared to justify greater decentralization of authority for low-value purchases to the individual branches.

- Personnel. No savings were foreseen in the bulk of personnel resources which are devoted to operation of facilities (branches and central library buildings). By comparison with "good practice" standards, none of the three systems had adequate middle management or fiscal/personnel staffs in 1957 -- and they now operate under even greater constraints, having lost personnel since that time.

Shaw professes to have begun his study with the belief that consolidation would be able to demonstrate savings. At its end, he had come to the opposite conclusion. (Note: While many of Shaw's analyses seem as valid today as when he made them, the introduction of the computer since that time has changed the case with respect to at least two areas -- cataloging and card production. The ways in which unified

action has been taken on these subjects -- without system consolidation -- are discussed later in this section.)

Would Consolidation Be Desirable Now?

Any new effort to unify the City's three public library systems must take into account not only the potential benefits to be gained thereby but also the problems or costs that would confront any effort at unification. In addition, the general absence of any strong pressures for unification must be taken into account. Even if a clearly positive result could be shown as possible through unification, alteration of an eighty-year old pattern -- which survived even the integration of the five boroughs into a single city -- cannot be expected to come about readily.

The following paragraphs cite what Nova sees as the principal costs and benefits of consolidation, and also notes that some of the advances which might be gained by consolidation can also be achieved more simply through joint action of the library systems.

The Costs of Consolidation

Consolidation of the three library systems would be a major and complex undertaking, involving both dollar costs and the loss of less tangible benefits now perceived by people within and outside the three systems. The principal costs that we see as potential accompaniments of consolidation are:

1. Legal Complexity. Any effort to unify the three systems will have to address a number of complex legal issues that arise form the different corporate status of the three systems. At a minimum, changes in both local laws and State legislation would appear to be required to achieve system unification.

2. Political Concerns. While the tempers of local patriotism may well have abated since the turn of the century, feelings on the part of residents and officials of Brooklyn and Queens that their concerns are not always given fair treatment are not unknown even today. Difficult-to-predict political factors might come to the fore as supporters of one or more of the library systems came to feel that their interests would be submerged or suppressed in a single city-wide system.

3. Relationship to Research Libraries. The fact that NYPL not only provides community library service to three boroughs but also operates a nationally significant system of research libraries creates another complexity. At present, the relationship between the research and branch functions within NYPL is a matter that presents some difficulties; unification would require that this issue be addressed within yet another framework.

4. Scale. Each of New York's three public library systems already ranks among the nation's largest. It seems doubtful that many

real efficiencies of scale are beyond their capacity at present; a triple-size system might actually encounter inefficiencies of scale. At a minimum, city-wide unification would raise for the libraries some of the same issues of the need for decentralization that led to creation of Community School Boards and to the coterminality provisions of the 1975 Charter amendments.

5. Loss of Diversity. The somewhat different approaches of the three systems may have positive features for the residents and businesses of their service areas.

6. Personnel Matters. In most respects the three systems already operate under very similar personnel systems: their employees are members of the same union (but different locals) and all wages are bargained for as part of a single unified process. However, there are differences in non-wage matters that could lead to difficult negotiations before a uniform pattern was agreed to.

Benefits of Consolidation

There are arguments that might be cited in favor of consolidation, both in terms of economy and less tangible advances.

1. Comparability to Other City Functions. Over the course of the City's history, most functions have become unified into single city-wide agencies, including ones such as sewer and street construction which were substantially decentralized at the borough level prior to the adoption of the 1963 Charter. There are no other obvious parallels to the borough structure of the Brooklyn and Queens libraries nor to the three-borough structure of the New York system. A single unified library system might more easily relate to other centralized city operations.

2. Administrative Savings. A single city-wide library system might be able to achieve some savings in central administrative staff; at the least, one set of top administrators would be possible.

3. Uniformity of Approach. While there are many similarities of approach to providing library services among the three systems, there are also differences which may be unfair to residents of the five boroughs (who are subject to uniform service standards in nearly all other municipal services).

4. More Effective Fund Raising. A unified library system might be able to create a more effective private fund-raising operation, with Brooklyn and Queens being able to appeal more effectively to the personal, corporate and foundation wealth which is concentrated in Manhattan.

Actions Possible Short of Consolidation

While arguments of the type described above can be advanced in favor and in opposition to consolidation, perhaps the most telling factor that argues against formal consolidation of the three systems is

that the most significant savings possible to a consolidated system can be attained by joint action short of formal merger. First, essentially uniform practices have already been achieved in basic operating policies:

- City budgeting practices are unified and consistent among the three systems.
- All three systems have comparable pay structures and their collective bargaining is unified within the city-wide system.
- Capital construction is unified within the general City system, as is the provision of heat, light and power to the branch buildings.

Second, specific actions have been taken to attain savings possible at a larger scale. Such actions include:

- Development of a common union catalog system which services the three City systems plus Westchester and Suffolk libraries as well. This involves a computerized inventory of all library holdings (located in NYPL's Donnell branch computer, and accessible via telephone connection by all participants).
- The common computerized catalog enables each library to decide what form it wants its own output to take (i.e., cards, a book catalog, microfiche or microfilm, etc.). Input variations are also possible; Queens plans to place its holdings in the system via an annual tape while NYPL and Brooklyn use their own approaches. NYPL and Brooklyn have also agreed on a common book catalog.
- A joint study of an automated circulation control system is now under way and it appears that in this area, too, a common system can be achieved -- with desirable local variations.
- The three City systems, and other private and public libraries in the region, have also developed unified approaches to after-hours reference response and pick-up and delivery service.

Additional steps toward unified, consolidated or cooperative actions also appear entirely feasible within the three-system structure, once the advantages of such action is demonstrated.

Summing Up: Consolidation

Perhaps the most compelling argument against a move to unify the City's three public library systems is that there are no identifiable constituencies that favor it or that see it worthy of a

major struggle. The only clear case that can be made in favor of unification is a modest one that is based in possible administrative savings.

New York City's recent experience in unification of city agencies on functional basis -- the Lindsay-era effort to establish functionally integrated "super-agencies" -- does not offer anything like a positive argument for library unification. Some administrative savings were achieved in the process (though not nearly as much as was forecast) but the process engendered a considerable amount of opposition as well as support. Benefits were not generally seen to outweigh costs of the changes; as a result, there was a political reaction against super-agencies by the successor Beame administration. Some aspects of the super-agencies survived but many did not. On balance, it is hard to maintain that the precedent is one that can justify library unification either from the viewpoint of economy or long-run stability.

One of the oldest management maxims if "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!". It is hard to argue that what's wrong with New York's public libraries is that they have three separate administrative and service delivery systems. To the extent that the systems have problems -- and they clearly do -- it's also difficult to see how unification into a single system is an answer to those problems. Neither the basic fiscal problems of the libraries, nor the presence of under-utilized branches, nor generally declining circulation levels appear to be problems which would be resolved through unification.

THE ISSUE OF DECENTRALIZATION

The fact that two of the City's three library systems serve single boroughs has led to occasional discussion of another approach to administrative rationalization: division of the three-borough NYPL into branch systems that would provide library service to the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island. As in the case of city-wide unification it's useful to begin an examination of this idea by looking at the possible advantages and disadvantages that might be associated with it.

Possible Benefits of Decentralization

1. Equity of Treatment. The simplest form or argument in favor of additional separate library corporations for three more boroughs is based on equity of treatment in availability of funds. This form of equity is generally susceptible to measurement.

To help the three boroughs served by NYPL to achieve service equity (or to be assured that they were receiving it) two steps have already been taken:

- NYPL completed a detailed cost-accounting analysis that divided its 1981 budget by centralized vs. borough-oriented services and provided details for each borough and branch within the borough. This made possible

independent assessments of funding equity on a borough basis.

- The analysis was also used as the basis for dividing NYPL's 1982 appropriation into two central and three borough appropriations to assure that equity could not only be measured but also achieved. The Board of Estimate and City Council, which include representatives from all boroughs served by NYPL, approved these appropriations as an equitable allocation of funds.

Thus, without the actual creation of three separate library corporations, equity of treatment has already been made subject to assessment by the elected leadership of the three boroughs and by community groups as well.

2. Recognition of Diversity. The three boroughs served by NYPL are of highly diverse character. Separate library systems might make possible greater attention to this diversity; however, as a partial step in this direction, NYPL has already appointed senior administrators to supervise its branch operations in each of the three boroughs it serves.

Disadvantages and Costs of Decentralization

1. Legal Complexity. Division of NYPL into three separate borough-serving corporations seems almost as legally and politically complex as would be the unification of three separate library systems. It would raise difficult questions such as: relationships of the new corporations with one another (since many of the existing administrative and support systems are fully integrated); how central and specialized facilities would be handled; and also how the Research Libraries would relate to separate borough library systems.

2. Additional Staff and System Costs. At a minimum, three new library corporations would seem to require some additional staff salaries (even if existing borough supervisors of branch services were assigned to the new positions of system director). In addition, separation of cataloging, book purchase and other systems would probably increase some costs as well.

3. Central Library Additions. While the Bronx and Staten Island have functional equivalents of central libraries (Fordham and St. George), neither is the equivalent of the Brooklyn or Queens central facilities in scale or budget. At present, they can rely on the Mid-Manhattan library to perform many central functions on their behalf. While there could be service improvements if new free-standing central libraries were created in these two boroughs, the costs would potentially be quite high.

4. Loss of Research Library Relationship. While it is hard to assess the professional and psychological values associated with the presence of the Research Libraries within the same corporate and administrative structure as NYPL's branch systems, there appear to be

prestige and professional advantages that might be weakened or lost if NYPL's branch operations were wholly separate and distinct.

Summing Up: Decentralization

The principal legitimate concern to be served by creation of borough-level units within three additional boroughs appears to be assurance of equity in services and funding. It appears that this concern can also be addressed through simpler and less costly means. In fact, such means are already substantially in place; the division of NYPL's budget appropriation into separate accounts allows for an appraisal of the equity of resource allocation at the borough level. With this key issue resolved -- or, at least, a framework for its resolution already in place -- there appears to be little more to be gained by legally separating NYPL into three borough operations; in fact, there might be significant dollar costs from such separation in the form of additional staff and/or central library requirements.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY SITUATION

A significant component of the population served by the public library systems is made up of public school pupils. They are frequent users of branch libraries both for school-related purposes and for general library purposes. Among the most frequent ways in which the libraries and the schools interact are:

- Elementary school teachers often bring their classes on tours to their local branch library to familiarize the pupils with the resources available there.

- Teachers at many grade levels often assign research work that requires pupils to utilize library resources. In general this use is welcomed by the libraries -- with one significant exception that often becomes a bone of contention between the libraries and the schools. This arises when a teacher assigns an entire class to do specific reading in books or publications of which the library has only one or two copies; the library is then beset by a number of pupils all asking for the same material.

An issue that has often been raised with respect to schools and libraries is: why does New York City support both public branch libraries and libraries in the public schools? Wouldn't there be savings if these two library systems were somehow combined or made non-duplicative? In an effort to shed some light on this issue Nova examined the current status and support levels of the school libraries. What we found -- as reported in the following paragraphs -- lends little support to the idea that significant savings could be achieved by combining public and school libraries; it does suggest that New York City's school libraries are in at least as difficult a situation as are its branch libraries, or perhaps are rather worse off.

Table 2.14 presents some key financial data on school libraries, drawn from data obtained by Nova from reports submitted by local schools to the State Department of Education. It shows that as of fiscal 1981 the entire amount of school resources specifically allocated to library activities came to only $1.5 million. This amount is equivalent to only 2.5% of the branch library budget that year and is less than one-tenth of one percent of the entire Board of Education budget!

On a comparative basis, New York City's school system allocates less than one-fifth as much money per pupil to school libraries as do school systems in the remainder of the state.

Table 2.14

SCHOOL LIBRARY FINANCES,
NEW YORK CITY AND REST OF STATE, 1980-81

Area	Total Funds Allocated*	Amount Per Student	Amount Per School
New York City	$ 1,530,000	$1.63	$1,575
Rest of State	17,404,000	9.07	5,608
State Total	$18,934,000	$6.62	$4,647

* These funds exclude the salaries and fringes of school librarians who generally work as both teachers and librarians, at least in the New York City system.

Source: New York State Department of Education.

Decisions on allocation of school funds for library purposes are made by individual community school boards for elementary and intermediate schools and by the Board of Education for the high schools. No state aid is specifically allocated for library purposes and while at one time a modest amount of Federal aid (Title IVB of ESEA) was dedicated to library use this aid has now been merged into an education block grant and is no longer specifically focused on school libraries.

New York State sets some minimal standards for school libraries. Its Bureau of School Libraries requires that every school have a library and a library program -- but it sets no standards for the size of library nor its contents, nor does it require that elementary schools have libraries. The Director of Library Services for the Board of Education estimates that not more than half of all elementary schools in New York City have someone qualified as a librarian as well as a teacher; often the school library is staffed -- if at all -- on only a part-time basis.

State regulations mandate that high schools, junior high schools and intermediate schools have school librarians. For every 1000 students in each of these schools there must be one school librarian (up to a maximum of three). Table 2.15 generally confirms

what we learned through interviews -- that many city schools do not have librarians. Systemwide, there is an average of 0.7 librarians per school (or 682 librarians for 971 schools). This stands in contrast to the situation in the rest of New York State where there is more complete coverage: schools outside the city average 1.16 librarians per school.

Virtually everyone we spoke to -- at the community school district level, at the Board of Education, and at the three public library systems -- agreed that the quality of public school libraries varies greatly. Some community school districts spend very little on books and other materials for libraries, while others have chosen to maintain their collections despite budget pressures. According to State data there are about 9.1 million books and 6.9 million titles in the City school libraries -- averaging about 10.5 books per student. This contrasts to about 21 books per student for the rest of the State. The City also lags behind the rest of the state in acquiring new titles for its school libraries. The City added only 234,000 titles (0.25 per student) in the most recent year for which data is available while public schools outside the City added 1,254,000 titles (or 0.65 per student).

Table 2.15

PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY STAFFING,
NEW YORK CITY AND REST OF STATE, 1981-82

Area	Supervisory	Direct Service	Totals	Total Per School
New York City	85	587	682	0.70
Rest of State	410	2,272	2,682	1.16
State Total	495	2,869	3,364	0.83

Source: New York State Education Department.

Note: Supervisory refers to non-teaching personnel who are involved in school library administration but are not direct providers of service. Direct service includes library media specialists and library teachers providing service to students but excludes aides or paraprofessionals. Total is unduplicated.

School-Library Relationships

At the individual school/branch level, relationships vary widely, depending in part on how teachers seek to instruct their pupils on use of public libraries and in part on the responsiveness of individual branch librarians. As noted in the survey of librarians described in Part One of this report, however, students are among the major users of all branch libraries.

At the higher administrative level, there appear to be good relationships between the central Board of Education and the central

offices of the three library systems. The closest link is between the directors of the Office of Children's Services in each library system and the head of library services in the Center for Library, Media and Telecommunications of the Board of Education. These individuals are professional librarians who share the view that more and better coordination is needed both to provide better services to children and to make the dollar go farther in an era of fiscal retrenchment.

In recent years, several mechanisms have been developed to strengthen ties between public libraries and educational institutions. Most significant among these has been the establishment of a pilot project called Intershare -- one of two regional intersystem library networks authorized by the state three years ago (the other called RARE is in the Rochester area). Over the past two years Intershare has been involved in coordinating relationships between the city libraries, city and northern suburb school library systems, and metropolitan area research libraries. This work has included the development of computerized locator files through the enhancement of the online data base of the Metropolitan Inter Library Cooperative System (MILCS), union catalogs for the school library systems, and strengthening the data base for periodicals throughout the region. Intershare has also been involved in formalizing interlibrary loan agreements among its members and delivering loaned library materials to various sites within the six counties in the system. Intershare works with school library systems to develop resource-sharing activities.

Many of the links envisaged by the Intershare pilot have yet to be completed. Intershare has already strengthened the New York Interlibrary Loan network (NYSILL) by serving as a communications link to Albany for public schools and educational institutions. It has also developed several services for library users and students including a telephone reference service called "Library on Call" and "Homework Hotline." The impact on public school students of the development of shared data bases, however, is yet to be realized. Joan Neumann, project coordinator of Intershare, has noted that the Westchester school system is far ahead of New York City in using the Intershare system for gaining access to the resources of other schools, college libraries and other public library systems. New York City schools have yet to be brought fully into the system.

The Board of Education's participation in Intershare is through a state-funded pilot project called the New York City School Library System (NYCSLS). This pilot project, which is in its third year, includes participation by 30 New York City schools. The objective of this pilot is to promote resource sharing among the 30 schools and to bring them into the Intershare system (among city schools, only the library holdings of the 30 NYCSLS schools have been placed into the MILCS data base). NYCSLS has also developed union catalogs for its member schools.

Are the School and Public Library Systems Redundant?

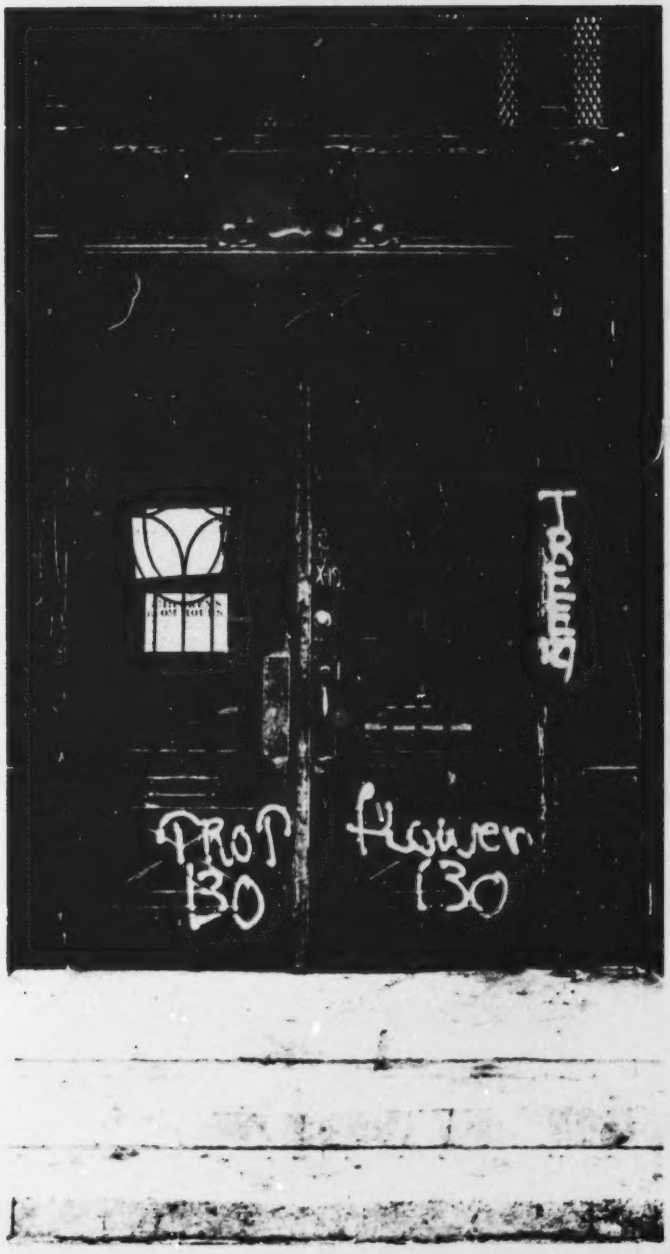
Nova found little support among the public library and school administrators to whom we talked for the idea that either of the two library systems could fulfill the functions of the other. While this is perhaps an expected bureaucratic response, it seems to be supported both by practice elsewhere in the state and nation and by functional differences between the two systems:

- School libraries, when staffed at all, are open only during school hours and are thus unavailable to the general public (and often even to most students who are usually required to be in class during these hours).

- Physical access to school buildings, even during the hours they are open, is not easy to achieve by non-pupils. Furthermore, location of a library within a school is generally seen by adult library users (especially the elderly) as inappropriate for their use.

- New York's schools already offer very minimal library services for their pupils as compared to those elsewhere in the state. To a significant degree, individual school boards seem already to have opted against trying to provide adequate library staff and materials and to rely instead on the public branches.

If an effort were to be made to merge the two library systems, the most feasible direction would seem to be for the school system to expand its reliance on the public branch system and to put additional resources into them so as to make possible better response to student needs. There are, however, a number of obstacles which would have to be overcome before this could happen. First, because the 33 community school boards have considerable independence in resource allocation and policy decisions, it would be necessary to work out specific arrangements in each of these instances; given the financial pressures under which most local school boards see themselves as operating it will not be easy to get them to agree to allocate some of their scarce resources outside their jurisdiction. With respect to high schools, a decision could be made at the central Board of Education level; in this case, however, there would be the need to revise State requirements (for in-school libraries and librarians). As a result, it seems unlikely that significant school library resources could be made available for allocation to the public branches.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2.3 LIBRARY FINANCES

This section addresses the issues of library finances which, for at least the past half dozen years, has been a dominant concern of library officials. The operations of the branch library systems today are financed almost completely by city tax levy appropriated in the expense budget. The only other significant sources of library funds have been State aid and -- before the program was eliminated -- Federal aid in the form of CETA support for library personnel. Other forms of Federal aid, income from fees and fines and private contributions have not accounted for more than a tiny fraction of branch library operating funds.

The branch library systems also receive city capital funds for construction and rehabilitation of the branch buildings. This study does not cover capital appropriations.

The remainder of this section looks at several aspects of library finances:

- First, the issue of equitable City treatment of the library function is addressed: did the branch libraries suffer more in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis than comparable public functions?
- Second, the equity of distribution of funds among the City's three branch library systems is examined.
- Third, the prospects for City support for libraries in the near future is briefly discussed in terms of the probable impact of Financial Plan projections.
- Fourth, State aid formulas are examined, including recent changes which appear to have worked against the interests of the city's libraries.
- Finally, prospects for enhanced revenues from other sources of income are considered.

LIBRARY FUNDING TRENDS RELATIVE TO COMPARABLE CITY AGENCIES

It is always difficult to make valid funding comparisons among different agencies and activities over time. Many factors complicate the situation, such as:

- What are the agencies that should be used for purposes of comparison?
- Should only City funds be taken into account or should the comparison include State and Federal aid?
- Can special factors affecting agency workload or external mandates be taken fully into account?

Despite these difficulties, it may nonetheless be useful to look at the overall pattern of funding received by the three branch library systems in recent years as compared to other City agencies. To do so, Nova has made several assumptions:

- The comparison agencies should be those whose purposes are primarily education, culture and recreation: The Board of Education, City University, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Cultural Affairs (whose budget includes funds allocated to museums and cultural institutions).

- Total general fund expenditures -- as shown in the Comptroller's Annual Report -- should be used to obtain the fairest comparison. These include State and Federal aid funds that flow through the City budget.

- To simplify the comparison, no agency-specific factors or external mandates have been given special consideration.

Table 2.16 presents annual General Fund data for each of the comparison agencies for fiscal years 1978 through 1981. Table 2.17 calculates the branch library figures as a percentage of each of the comparison agency budgets and as a percentage of the total educational-cultural-recreational funds expended by the City.

On the basis of this data, at least in the past four years there does not appear to have been a steady trend of gain or loss by the libraries in relation to the comparison agencies:

- The libraries gained in fiscal 1979 as compared to their 1978 position as a fraction of the total comparison group (but did not do relatively as well as Parks or Cultural Affairs).

- In fiscal 1980 the libraries lost ground against the group as a whole and each member of it.

- In fiscal 1981 the situation reversed, with the libraries gaining ground against every member of the group.

The branch libraries ended 1981 in very nearly the same relative position they held in 1978, three years earlier; in fact their share of the comparison agency budgets was very slightly higher than in 1978.

An Alternative Approach

While we believe that the year-end General Fund figures are the most appropriate comparison data, one could select an alternative approach. One such alternative was chosen by the Citizens Budget

Table 2.16

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES FOR SELECTED NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES,
FISCAL YEARS 1978-1981

(In $ Millions)

	1978 (1)	1979	1980	1981
Board of Education	2,956.1	2,251.2	2,576.2	2,712.6
City University	517.1	448.6	483.9	487.6
Parks and Recreation	99.4	74.6	86.5	94.2
Cultural Affairs	25.5	23.6	27.2	29.6
Branch Libraries (2)	64.1	52.8	55.3	60.6
Total	3,662.2	2,850.8	3,229.1	3,384.6

Notes: (1) Pension funds included in agency budgets in 1978; not subsequently.

(2) NYPL, Brooklyn and Queens Borough; excludes NYPL Research Libraries.

Source: Annual Report of the New York City Comptroller, Fiscal 1981.

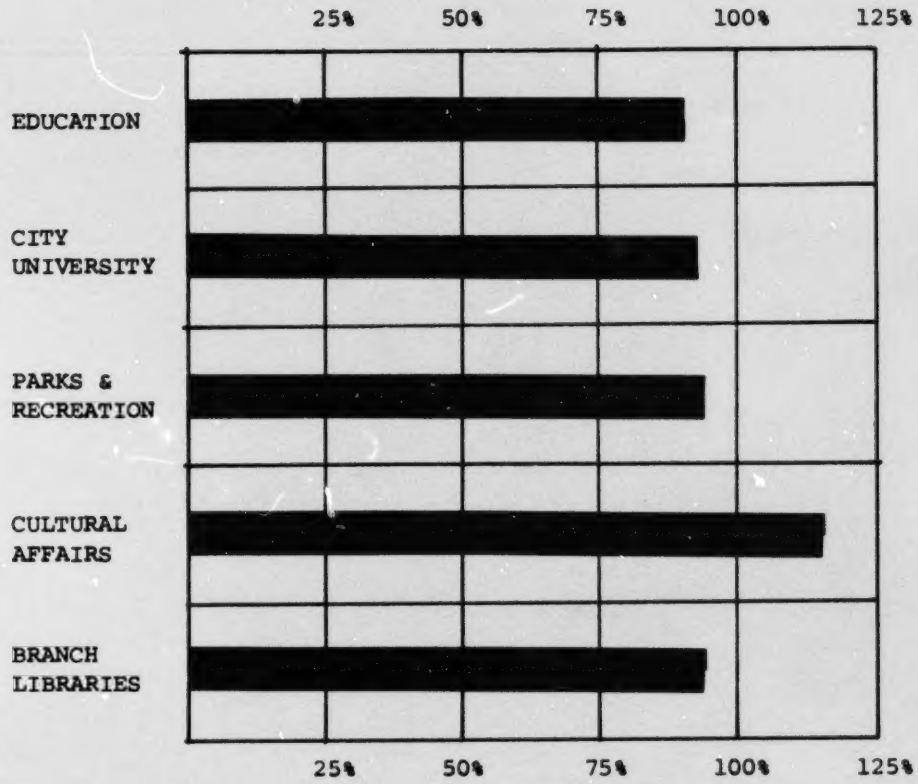
Table 2.17

BRANCH LIBRARY SHARE OF COMPARISON AGENCY BUDGETS
FISCAL YEARS 1978-1981

(In Percent)

	1978	1979	1980	1981
Board of Education	2.17	2.14	2.15	2.23
City University	12.40	11.77	11.43	12.43
Parks and Recreation	64.49	70.78	63.93	64.33
Cultural Affairs	251.37	223.73	203.31	204.73
Total*	1.75	1.85	1.71	1.79

* Including Branch Library figure.



1981 Expenditures as a Percent of 1978

COMPARISON OF GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES, 1978 AND 1981

Commission in a report issued in June 1981 ("Functional Expenditure Priorities in the City of New York"). The CBC analysis divided City spending into three categories: mandatory; partially discretionary; and discretionary. Only the last two categories, CBC argued, came under the control of the Mayor, Board of Estimate and City Council and therefore only those should be viewed as representing City priorities.

Table 2.18 presents data from the CBC report comparing the libraries with the same agencies used for comparison purposes in the previous tables in this section. However, it should be noted that the "libraries" category in this table includes the NYPL Research Libraries as well as the branch systems.

Table 2.18

DISCRETIONARY AND PARTIALLY DISCRETIONARY SPENDING
BY SELECTED AGENCIES, FISCAL YEARS 1978-82

(In $ Millions)

			Change	
	1978	1979	$	%
Board of Education	$ 52.7	$ 241.7	+189.0	+358.6%
City University	201.3	97.4	-103.9	- 51.6
Parks and Recreation	104.0	102.6	- 1.4	- 1.3
Cultural Affairs	24.8	36.1	+ 11.2	+ 45.6
Libraries	57.3	62.2	+ 4.9	+ 8.6
Sub-total, Above Categories	440.1	540.0	+ 99.9	+ 22.7
Total, All Expense Budget	$4,231.4	$5,039.9	+808.5	+19.1%

Source: Citizens Budget Commissioner, Functional Expenditures Priorities in the City of New York (June 1981), Table 5.

The table shows that libraries did less well than the comparison group as a whole (up 8.6% compared to 22.7% for the 1978-82 period). This happened largely because of a very large discretionary increase for the Board of Education and occurred despite a major discretionary decrease in City University. Each of these changes in turn has an explanation:

- The Board of Education's "legally required" base was determined in relation to the Stavisky-Goodman law. The Office of Management and Budget has disagreed with this approach to defining discretionary spending. Even CBC notes that "Mayoral discretion since 1978 has certainly favored education over other functions, but alternative approaches to defining mandated costs might show less dramatic change" (p. 17).

- City University's apparent sharp loss of discretionary funds is almost solely the result of the State's

willingness to take over an increased share of senior college costs. It is hard to characterize this major triumph as a Mayoral decision to reduce discretionary allocations to CUNY!

CBC data show that the library share of the group total fell from 13.02% in fiscal 1978 to 12.54% in 1981; had the earlier figure held in 1981 the libraries would have gained about $2.3 million in total appropriations.

Libraries also did less well in the terms of the CBC analysis than a number of non-comparable functions. As compared to the library gain of 8.6% over the 1978-82 period, some other agency discretionary gains included:

Housing	+ 71.5%
Fire	+ 31.5%
Governance	+ 29.4%
Sanitation	+ 27.1%
Transportation	+ 26.2%
Health	+ 21.6%
Police	+ 16.6%

Summing Up: Funding Comparison

On the basis of this analysis, it is Nova's conclusion that the branch libraries -- as a group -- have been treated about as well in the City appropriation process during the past four years as have comparable agencies performing educational, cultural or recreational missions. One might argue that libraries should have been treated better, or worse, depending on one's view of the importance of their function or changes in the workload to which they must respond or other factors. There are no scientific or rational bases for dividing a budget among various public functions and responsibilities.

While the libraries may have done somewhat less well in holding their share of discretionary dollars -- if one accepts the CBC definitions -- there is a clear compensating factor: nearly all of the library budgets were classified as discretionary by CBC while only small fractions of the Board of Education and CUNY budgets were so classified. On this basis, the libraries could be said to have done well indeed in holding their total budget share nearly constant during a period of severe fiscal strain on the City.

EQUITY OF LIBRARY FUNDING AMONG AND WITHIN THE THREE SYSTEMS

A matter of considerable concern to New York's three library systems is how the total funds allocated by the City to branch library activities is distributed among them. A related concern, raised at times by elected officials within the three boroughs served by the New York Public Library, has been the equity of allocations as among the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island. This sub-section contains two parts dealing in succession with these issues.

General Comment

This analysis addresses only one specific aspect of equity: the allocation of operating budget resources among New York City's three library systems. It does not deal with capital resources, nor does it deal with the equity by which operating budget resources are sub-allocated within each library system to individual branches and communities.

Equity is, at bottom, a normative matter. In the words of William H. Lucy and Kenneth R. Mladenka of the University of Virginia in their thoughtful paper, Equity and Service Distribution, (National Training and Development Service):

> "Since equity involves individual value judgments, it is an essentially political question." (p. 1.1)

Nova does not pretend that this analysis is anything more than our best effort to examine a complex situation and to help others examine the same situation. While we believe that, all things considered, the indicators of equity we have developed and the weighting we assign them in this analysis are the most appropriate measures of equity in the situation under study, we do not pretend that all reasonable people must necessarily agree with us. Equity -- especially when money is involved -- is inevitably a matter which arouses disagreement.

EQUITY AMONG THE THREE SYSTEMS

Table 2.19 presents a summary of the distribution of City budget appropriations for the three library systems over the past five years. Part A of the table covers total funding while Part B includes only tax levy (and tax levy-equivalent capital funding in earlier years). There are not great differences between the total and tax levy distribution on a percentage basis.

As can be seen, there has been a fairly steady year-to-year relationship among the three systems in their shares of total and tax levy library funding; there have been fluctuations but they have not exceeded 1.5 percentage points in this time period. About a decade ago, in fiscal year 1971, NYPL's share of total appropriations was 42.2%, Brooklyn's was 29.2% and Queens' was 28.6%.

Table 2.19

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS
BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEMS, FISCAL YEARS 1978-82

A. Total Adopted Budget

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	5-Year Average
NYPL	42.8	42.6	44.1	44.2	43.7	43.5
Brooklyn	28.6	28.2	27.4	27.5	27.7	27.9
Queens	28.5	29.1	28.5	28.3	28.6	28.6

B. Tax Levy Funds Only

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	5-Year Average
NYPL	43.1	42.9	43.3	43.5	43.7	43.3
Brooklyn	27.9	27.4	27.0	27.2	27.4	27.4
Queens	28.9	30.0	29.7	29.4	28.9	29.4

Source: Office of Management and Budget

Notes:
1. Excludes New York Research Libraries, a separate city appropriation.
2. In 1978 and 1979 there were some capital funds included in the tax levy amounts.
3. Percentages may not add exactly to 100.0 because of rounding.

Measures of Equity

There are no established standards for how equity or need for library service should be measured. In order to develop a sense of appropriate measures, Nova consulted the directors of the three systems; we also developed our own ideas. On the basis of these discussions and our analysis, we arrived at the conclusion that there are four principal measures of need that should be considered in measuring equity of need in New York City's three library systems. These are:

1. Population. All three of the directors agreed that this was the single most suitable measure. We also considered age groups and other population characteristics but finally rejected them on the grounds that library services are needed by persons of all ages and characteristics. (There was one exception to this conclusion: see "Poverty", below.)

2. Employment. While most people use library services near their residence, some employed persons use them near their work place. Also, all three systems allow

non-resident workers (even from out of the city) to use their services without charge. In addition, visitors to shopping or entertainment places may use library services located near such sites. We believe that employment is a good measure of the extent to which workers and other non-resident visitors are likely to require library services.

3. Poverty. All three library directors cited special difficulties in serving low income neighborhoods, both because of the need for extra outreach efforts and because of the greater security problems in such areas. We believe that the number of residents receiving public assistance is a good measure of poverty.

4. Land Area. While views differed among the three directors, all felt that in one way or another factors such as density or the size of area served by a library system could affect the cost of service delivery. Since population has already been cited above, the addition of a land area measure would address the density issue (density = persons/unit of land area).

Additional factors might also be included as measures of equity. Some that we considered and decided against were:

- Circulation. This is a measure of use, rather than need; further, it could be affected by measurement technique (although we think it isn't in New York). Circulation might also reflect the fact that a library system was under-funded or over-funded relative to others.

- Branches. The number of branches, their age or physical condition or other features clearly can affect cost. We decided to leave this out of equity measurement, partly because it would be very hard to measure fairly and also because the structure of the branch system is largely a result of decisions on how to use funds, rather than reflecting a basic need for them.

Table 2.20 presents data on how the four measures of equity which we believe are most relevant are distributed among the three library systems.

Table 2.20

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FOUR MEASURES
AMONG THE BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEMS

	NYPL	Brooklyn	Queens	Total
Population	41.6%	31.6%	26.8%	100.0%
Employment	72.5	13.4	14.1	100.0
Poverty	47.8	39.2	13.1	100.0
Land Area	39.9	24.0	36.1	100.0

Sources: 1. Population: preliminary counts, 1980 Census.

2. Employment: private sector jobs, 1981 from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

3. Poverty: October, 1980 data on recipients of AFDC, Home Relief and SSI.

4. Land Area: NYC Official Directory, 1981-82.

Notes: 1. NYPL includes boroughs of Manhattan, Bronx and Staten Island.

2. Percentages may not always add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Weighting the Measures

Even if everyone were to agree that the four measures we recommend are the most appropriate to assess equity, there is still the issue of how they ought to be weighted relative to one another. Part of the decision seems clear: population ought to be given by far the heaviest value. All three library system directors agreed on this. But what, if any, weight ought to be assigned to the other three factors?

While the possible combinations are nearly infinite, it is our judgment that a realistic range of possible weights would be about as follows:

	Possible Weighting	
Measure	Minimum	Maximum
Population	80%	100%
Employment	5	10
Poverty	5	10
Land Area	0	10

Table 2.21 presents four cases which utilize these possible weightings in various combinations. The fifth case is based on population data alone.

Table 2.21

EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE WEIGHTING OF
EQUITY MEASURES FOR THE BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEMS

	Case				
	A	B	C	D	E
Weighting:					
Population	80%	80%	85%	90%	100%
Employment	10	5	5	5	0
Poverty	10	5	5	5	0
Land Area	0	10	5	0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Distribution:					
NYPL	45.3	43.3	43.3	43.4	41.6
Brooklyn	30.5	30.3	30.7	31.1	31.6
Queens	24.2	26.4	26.0	25.5	26.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The upper part of the table shows the different weights assigned to each of the four equity measures. For example, under Case A, population accounts for 80% of the total; employment for 10%, poverty another 10%, and no weight at all is assigned for land area. The lower part of the table presents the results under each case for each library system. For example, under Case A, the NYPL system would be entitled to a 45.3% share, Brooklyn 30.5% and Queens 24.2%.

The data in the lower half of Table 2.21 was calculated by using the weighting in the upper half of the table and the distribution data in Table 2.20. For example, under Case A NYPL would get a population weight of 0.80 (Table 2.21) times 41.6% (Table 2.20); it would get an employment weight of 0.10 times 72.5; a poverty weight of 0.10 times 47.8; and zero weight for land area. This results in:

0.80 x 41.6 = 33.28
0.10 x 72.5 = 7.25
0.10 x 47.8 = 4.78
0 x 39.9 = 0.00

Total 45.30 (see NYPL, Case A in Table 2.22)

Perhaps the single most significant feature of the five cases presented in Table 2.22 is that the results don't differ very widely from one another. The population distribution factor dominates the results and while the other factors vary widely in their distribution among the systems, they don't differ enough and aren't weighted heavily enough to change the outcomes markedly. If one took the extreme ranges shown in the five cases, the results would look like those in Table

2.22, which also shows the five-year average of city tax levy distribution for comparison purposes.

Table 2.22

RANGE OF EQUITY MEASURES FROM FIVE CASES

Branch System	Range of Equity Measures Minimum	Maximum	Average	Five-Year City Funds Average
NYPL	41.6%	45.3%	43.4%	43.3%
Brooklyn	30.3	31.6	30.8	27.4
Queens	24.2	26.8	25.8	29.4

Choosing among the five cases necessarily involves subjective judgment. Nova believes that Case C (where population is weighted at 85% and the other three factors at 5% each) is probably the most equitable of the five; it is also close to the average result for all five cases. Cases B and D would be our next choices, in that order. From our viewpoint, Cases A and E both tend to be somewhat unbalanced in their weighting.

Comparing the Results with Fund Distribution

A comparison of the average and extremes for equity measures in Table 2.22 with the five-year average fund distribution indicates that:

- NYPL appears to have been treated about equitably in fund distribution, at least in terms of the average and three of the five cases.
- Brooklyn appears to have received less than an equitable funding share by an amount on the rough order of three percent of city library appropriations.
- Queens appears to have done somewhat better than average by an amount on the rough order of three percent of city library appropriations.

Alternative Views on Measuring Equity

Nova believes that the four measures of equity cited above are the most appropriate ones to assess the need for library service. We also believe that our five "cases" present the most reasonable range of combinations of such measures and that, of these, Case C is our idea of the single best combination. But we fully recognize that there are other possible views of measures and weights -- and even of the entire analytic process used here.

In fairness, it is appropriate to review some of these alternative views.

1. Alternative Measures. Some members of the Library Study Committee have suggested that circulation or number of branches might be better measures of equity than those proposed above (or, perhaps, should be used in combination with them). Table 2.23 presents data on these alternative measures for the three library systems.

Table 2.23

CIRCULATION AND NUMBER OF BRANCHES, FISCAL 1981

	Circulation		Branches*		
Branch System	Number of Items (000's)	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Five Year City Funds Average
NYPL	8,183.9	39.3%	78	40.6%	43.3%
Brooklyn	6,667.3	32.0	58	30.2	27.4
Queens	5,954.3	28.6	56	29.2	29.4
Total	20,805.5	100.0	192	100.0	100.0

* Excludes central facilities.

As can be seen, in Table 2.23 Brooklyn's share of total circulation is slightly larger than its share of the measures utilized in the five cases analyzed above and also larger than its recent share of funds. Queens' share of total circulation is greater than its share of the measures utilized in any of the five cases; it is nearly equal to Queens' average share of city funds over the past five years and is exactly equal to its share of total budget appropriations over the past five years. The principal difference from the five-case analysis is that the NYPL share of circulation is lower than that implied by the combinations of population, employment, poverty and land area measures used in the five cases. NYPL's circulation share is also markedly lower than its funding share over the past five years.

The distribution of branches among the systems, also shown in table 2.23, is generally parallel to the existing fund distribution pattern. In this case, NYPL has a smaller share of branches than of city funds, Brooklyn has a larger share, and Queens about the same share.

Another factor that might be taken into account is age of branches -- as a surrogate measure for the additional operating costs of branch buildings. Because heat, light and power costs of branches are provided directly by the City (through the Department of General Services) the principal ways in which branch age might impact on library costs would appear to be (1) through higher maintenance costs and (2) possibly through higher staff costs, if a second or third floor in an older building required the stationing of personnel. Brooklyn has the highest proportion of older pre-war structures (two out of three buildings) followed by NYPL (one out of two). Queens has the lowest proportion of older buildings, with only one in eight having been built pre-World War II.

2. Funding for Other Activities. Library funding can be examined in isolation from other city activities, as is done in this analysis. The argument can also be made that under a unified budgetary system such as New York City's, it is unrealistic to test for geographic equity in terms of any single function; rather, the framework should be a review of overall geographic equity of funding for all related public purposes. Under such an assumption, it would be necessary to extend the analysis of equity of fund distribution to such functions as education, cultural affairs, parks and recreation and possibly even other city-supported activities such as police and fire.

3. Alternative Weights. Some members of the Library Study Committee, while agreeing with Nova's four equity measures, have suggested alternative weightings for one or more. Table 2.24 contains four additional cases of such weightings, all compared with Nova's preferred "Case C":

Table 2.24

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR WEIGHTING OF
EQUITY MEASURES FOR THE BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEMS

	C	F	G	H	I
Weighting:					
Population	85%	85%	75%	75%	75%
Employment	5	5	15	20	15
Poverty	5	0	10	5	5
Land Area	5	10	0	0	5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Distribution:					
NYPL	43.3	43.0	46.9	48.1	46.5
Brooklyn	30.7	29.9	29.6	28.4	28.9
Queens	26.0	27.1	23.5	23.6	24.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: See text for methodology used in calculation.

Case F would give relatively heavy weight to low population density (or high relative weight to land area). It would give no weight at all to the poverty factor. Under this weighting, Queens would score higher than under any other of the nine cases studied.

Cases G, H and I give lower weight to population and higher weight to the employment factor than in the cases presented earlier in this sub-section. Under these, NYPL scores higher than in any of the early cases while Brooklyn (to some degree) and Queens (to a considerable degree) score lower.

4. Alternative Approaches. It is also possible to argue for a completely different approach to assessment of funding equity. Such an argument is made in a report entitled "Equity of Library Funding" prepared for the Queens Borough Public Library by Assistant Professor Betty J. Turock of the Rutgers Graduate School of Library and Information Studies and Professor Ralph Blasingame of the same institution (March 22, 1982) in response to an earlier version of Nova's equity analysis. Their paper argues that Nova's four indicators are inadequate because they omit "the many elements involved in funding equity". As an alternative, they suggest a "systems model" which combines inputs, outputs, operations and environment. Their paper does not, however, provide indications of the precise data that would be required to construct such a model nor what it would be likely to show as to equity among New York's three public library systems.

The Cost of Achieving Inter-System Equity

If one agrees with Nova's conclusion that a significant degree of inter-system funding inequity has arisen among New York's branch libraries, the question arises as to whether action should be taken to correct it and, if so, what should be done.

A decision not to correct the pattern of funding inequity might be based on the belief that libraries should not be seen as an isolated public function and that any inequity shown in library funding is part of an overall budgetary trade-off. The present analysis -- limited as it is to library activities -- does not purport to address this issue.

On the other hand, if New York City's government accepts the general thrust of the argument presented in this sub-section that inter-system inequity has developed and if the City wants to redress the apparent imbalance, it has several options to choose among. First it could decide that adjustments for equity should not affect total library funding and that Brooklyn's increase to a level of equity should occur in parallel with reductions in the Queens budget. A second alternative would be "leveling up": by increasing Brooklyn and, to a lesser extent, NYPL funding without cutting back on the level of Queens support. Either approach could also be achieved in a single year or phased in over several budgets. To provide a sense of the sums involved, Table 2.25 presents an estimate of the costs to each system and to the City of an adjustment between Brooklyn and Queens, based on the anticipated June 1983 funding level and assuming the percentage allocations developed in Case C.

Table 2.25

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING PATTERNS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY
(ASSUMING DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO CASE C)

(In $ Millions)

Branch System	June 1983 Budget Level (est.)	Alternative "Case C" Allocations: No Change in Total Funds	Alternative "Case C" Allocations: Leveling Up, Queens Constant
NYPL	$28.95	$28.92	$32.42
Brooklyn	18.36	20.50	22.99
Queens	19.47	17.36	19.47
Total	$66.78	$66.78	$74.88

In fiscal 1983, the approximate cost of achieving equity would have been a loss of about $2 million to the Queens system and a gain of an equal amount in Brooklyn; there would have been no net cost to the city budget. To have held the Queens system harmless, the City would have had to appropriate an additional $8 million, of which about $4.6 million would have been for Brooklyn and the remainder for NYPL. Phasing in over a period of years would reduce the impact of either approach.

EQUITY WITHIN NYPL

The New York Public Library system serves three boroughs: Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island. At times in the past, this has resulted in concerns about the degree of equity of fund allocation within this branch library system. Then, in 1980, the city appropriation for NYPL was subdivided into three borough accounts plus two system-wide allocations (essentially covering specialized central libraries such as Mid-Manhattan and Lincoln Center and specialized central staff functions that couldn't be fully allocated by borough). This made it possible for each of the boroughs served by NYPL to examine the pattern of fund allocation and to assess its equity.

Nova made an analysis of NYPL's fund allocation pattern and came to the following conclusions:

- If one attributes to each borough all of the branch system facilities located in it (thus allocating the budget for the central Mid-Manhattan Library and other specialized facilities such as Lincoln Center's Performing Arts Library and the Library for the Blind) then Manhattan appears to be funded at a higher level than the Bronx or Staten Island.

- On the other hand, if one excludes these specialized facilities on the ground that they serve all three boroughs in the system, then Manhattan appears to be funded at a lower level than the Bronx or Staten Island.

We see no basis for deciding which of these two approaches to allocation of NYPL's central facilities is the more correct. Absent such a basis, it is Nova's conclusion that the current pattern of allocation of funds within NYPL meets reasonable standards of equity.

Summing Up: Nova's Conclusions

As noted at the outset of this sub-section, there are no hard and fast definitions of equity that apply to the situation of New York City and its three library systems or, indeed, to any other appraisal of equity. The subject is one on which reasonable people can disagree, both as to how it should be measured and what should be done about it.

Basically, Nova came to three conclusions in our analysis:

- Measures of Equity. While there are no hard and fast standards, Nova believes that an assessment of equity for branch library funding should take into account four basic measures: population, employment, poverty and land area. Of these, population should be given the greatest weight by far.

- Inter-System Equity. As among the three branch library systems, Nova concludes that recent library appropriations have treated NYPL equitably but have under-allocated library funds to Brooklyn and over-allocated funds to Queens. The imbalance between the two boroughs at present is on the order of about $2 million per year.

- Inter-System Equity. Within the three boroughs served by the NYPL branch system, it is Nova's conclusion that the present inter-borough fund distribution is essentially equitable.

Nova makes no recommendations as to what -- if any -- action New York City should take about our findings. That, we believe, is appropriately a matter for members of the Library Study Committee and the elected leadership of the City to decide.

DIFFERING VIEWS

During the discussion of the material presented above on the subject of equity it became apparent that several participants in the Library Study Committee disagreed with the consultant's findings and conclusions. These alternative views are presented below.

1. The Office of Management and Budget disagrees with Nova's conclusion with respect to the four measures of equity. It feels that a discussion of equity must focus on the equity of service delivered by the three systems. The analysis presented here centers on equity of need, based only on quantitative factors, i.e., population, land area, poverty and employment. OMB does not necessarily agree that these four

factors are all relevant, and, additionally, OMB believes that there are other, purely qulitative elements that must be considered.

2. The Queens Borough Public Library also disagreed. It provided the following statement of dissent:

> The Queens Borough Public Library's Board of Trustees requested Blasingame-Turock Associates to assess and comment on the Nova Institute document on Equity of Library Funding. Blasingame/Turock has serious reservations concerning the advisability of applying Nova's findings to decision-making on funding equity. For instance, (1) Two of the indicators, employment and poverty, cannot be separated from population, leading to a triple bias in the assessment process. (2) Users are not regarded as important to determining equity. Blasingame/Turock suggested that the broader issues related to equity of funding should include measurement of environment (demographic characteristics -- age, ethnic origin, occupation, education, income), inputs (library income, expenditures, staff size, facilities, and materials collections), as well as outputs (circulation, registered borrowers, reference questions answered, service hours, user satisfaction, materials and staff availability). Blasingame/Turock were not requested by Queens Borough Public Library to devise a formula for equity, but only to respond to the Nova document.

From the Library's point of view, any formula which does not include measurement of use is an academic exercise. Blasingame/Turock agree. They said "The combined emphasis made by the indicators selected as the basis for determining funding equity appears to be at the expense of persons who use libraries. Users are among the most vocal supporters of taxation for library service.". To allocate resources for the three public library systems by formulas which disregard use would place library funding on a basis different from other city-funded institutions.

Furthermore, the Queens Borough Public Library has opened six new branches in the last five years. Each branch was funded in an amount close to $200,000, and each successive year of operation has compounded that amount of money in the expense budget. This information, known to all participants in the Library Study, has been given no weight by Nova in consideration of the equity issue, despite its probable effect on the Queens Borough Public Library expense budget.

THE PROSPECTS FOR CITY FUNDING OF THE BRANCH LIBRARIES

As the date of the preparation of this report (December, 1982) the prospects for City financial support of the operating budgets of the branch libraries are in serious question. Despite the major progress achieved by New York City in recovering from its fiscal crisis, by 1982 the City's finances were again in difficult condition. The combination of a deep national recession and a slowing of inflation

(which had previously helped boost City revenues) was forcing the City to retrench sharply during fiscal 1982 and presented a serious problem for the coming fiscal year.

Table 2.26 presents Financial Plan data for the three branch library systems for the period 1982-84.

- The fiscal 1982 data is actual data for the year.
- Two separate fiscal 1983 figures are shown. The first represents the Plan at the time the City budget for the year was adopted, the second is a revised figure taking into account changes planned at mid-year.
- The fiscal 1984 figure is taken from the January 1983 Preliminary Budget.

Table 2.26

FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE BRANCH LIBRARIES
CITY FUNDS ONLY, FISCAL YEARS 1982, 1983 AND 1984

(In $ Millions)

	1982 Final	1983 Adopted	1983 June	1984
NYPL	27,107	28,915	28,945	28,259
Brooklyn	16,980	18,287	18,363	17,832
Queens Borough	17,973	19,425	19,472	18,984
Total	62,060	66,627	66,780	65,075

Source: Office of Management and Budget.

These base figures show only part of the story of library finance because of the complex technical changes that are involved. For example, while there was an apparent increase of $253 thousand in fiscal 1983 funds for the three systems from the Adopted Budget to the January figures, in reality the change represented a loss in available resources to the three systems of $1.5 million. This happened because of a PEG (or cut in funds available to the library), counter-balanced by an increase in collective bargaining funds. The collective bargaining funds must be dedicated to pay wage increases owed to existing staff, and therefore the library systems were forced to absorb the full amount of the PEG, in line with standard City policy.

At this writing (March, 1983) it is still too early to assess what the final fiscal 1984 budget levels for the libraries will be. The City's fiscal condition appeared to be improving over earlier forecasts, but it was not yet certain that the libraries would be able even to sustain their 1983 level of support.

As is characteristic of the Financial Plan process, the "out-years" of the plan (1985 and 1986) do not display additional cuts at this time. If, however, the City faces continued budgetary stress in these later years it may become necessary for the libraries to cut back even further. At this writing, therefore, the prospects of the libraries for the next few years appear to be for a continuation of current stringent conditions.

STATE AID TO LIBRARIES

Apart from City appropriations, the only significant other source of financial support for the three branch library systems has been State aid. During the period 1978 to 1983 State aid accounted for an average of about 16% of branch library budgets. This section examines recent changes in State aid, some aspects of which have benefitted New York's libraries while others have not been as favorable.

From 1978 through 1981, the State of New York provided $33 million per year in aid to the state's 22 public library systems and nine Reference and Research Library Resource Systems. In 1981, the State Legislature amended the State Aid to Libraries Act (Chapter 718, Laws of 1981) in order to provide increased financial support to local library systems. The 1981 legislation sanctioned the largest increase in aid to libraries in New York's history, beginning with an additional $7.5 million in State fiscal year 1981-82 and $10 million per year thereafter. Even with this increase, however, State aid still comprises only a modest share of the budgets of New York City's branch libraries.

State aid is distributed to the 22 library systems under a complex formula based on geographic area and per capita payments. There is also a provision for a minimum grant of $500,000 per system, a flat $50,000 in book aid funds for central libraries, and a "local sponsor incentive" component (providing $.65 for every $11 contributed by local sponsors up to 40% of 1980 levels).

Special grants are also authorized for projects within the 22 public library systems. New York City's libraries garnered the lion's share of the fiscal 1982-83 total of $5.73 million in special grants. Grantees included the New York Public Library ($4,375,000 for the Research Libraries, $450,000 for the Library for the Blind and $500,000 for the Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture), the Brooklyn Public Library ($350,000 for the Business Library), the Nassau County Public Library ($30,000) and the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library ($50,000). The state education law also sanctions grants of $40,000 to any library system that operates an outreach services program for the blind and handicapped.

Table 2.27 summarizes state aid amounts granted to the three New York City systems in 1982 (State fiscal year 1982-83). In all cases the grantor was the New York State Education Department.

The Formula Revision

The 1981 state law that authorized a fund increase for the state's libraries also modified the formula for the distribution of state funds. The flat annual county grant was unchanged but both per capita payments and payments for the size of the library service area were liberalized. Both the old and the new formula are weighted toward population and thus the more populous areas get more state aid.

Table 2.27

STATE AID TO NEW YORK CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS, 1982

(State Fiscal Year 1982-1983)

	New York Public Library	Brooklyn Public Library	Queens Borough Public Library	Use
State Aid to Libraries (General Operations Formula Grant)	$3,265,330	$2,431,580	$2,065,979	To reimburse the City for partial funding of library annual budget.
Sponsor Incentive Aid	680,452	535,493	545,280	Unrestricted aid to local systems.
Central Library Development	619,369	469,746	398,428	To provide funds for central library development.
Central Library Book Aid	50,000	50,000	50,000	To provide funds for the development of central library book collections.
Coordinated Outreach Services	40,000	40,000	40,000	Brooklyn Public Library's grant is for services to the aged. New York Public Library's and Queens Borough's for services to the handicapped.
Adult Basic Education			11,008	Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language.
Other	450,000 (Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)	350,000 (Business Library)	60,000 (Black Heritage Center)	
Totals	$5,105,151	$3,876,819	$3,170,695	

Source: The New York Public Library
The Queens Borough Public Library
The Brooklyn Public Library

However, both the size of a library system service area and the number of counties served by a library system also play important roles. These factors serve to reduce the strength of the population factor.

As a result of the formula change, all three of New York City's branch library systems gained in the amount of State aid, but their gains were all below the mean 22% gain for all 22 systems in the state. On a comparable basis, the State Senate Research Service estimates that NYPL (exclusive of the Research Libraries) will gain by only 9%, and Brooklyn and Queens by about 15% each. The three city systems would have had to receive approximately $235,000 (Brooklyn), $501,000 (NYPL) and $142,000 (Queens) more in state funding to reach the mean percentage gain. This analysis excludes special grants made to public library systems and includes only funds distributed by formula.

One way of assessing the equity of the new formula is to look at the percentages of the statewide total received by each system under the old and new formulas. Table 2.28 shows the shares of state aid received by each of the 22 library systems under the new and old formulas and provides comparisons to each system's share of the state's population. Table 2.29 summarizes the data for the three New York City systems in a way that makes it possible to see the effect of the formula change in relation to population change more clearly. Of the three City systems, NYPL and Queens do a bit worse under the new formula (in relation to population alone) than they did under the old. Brooklyn does a bit better. Overall, the three City systems do slightly better under the new formula, relative to population, than they did under the old.

Achieving Further Change in State Aid

New York City's situation with respect to state library aid is much the same as it is in aid to education: the formulas adopted by the Legislature tend to assure fund distribution patterns that overlook the serious economic and fiscal problems of the city. An alternative concept, which has become known as "municipal overburden," would go beyond the direct service issues involved (such as number of people, land area, etc.) to consider also the full range and cost of services which a local government must provide because of concentrations of low-income, disadvantaged residents or similar factors. Much discussed in the education aid field, the "municipal overburden" approach -- if it could be sold to the new Governor and Legislature -- might also be of significant help in assuring more equitable distribution of library aid to the city.

There are two other problems worth mention in this regard: First, the State's own difficult fiscal condition in fiscal 1983 and forecast for 1984 seems to make less likely further advances in library aid in the near future; and second, the fact that the city has tended to consider most State aid to branch libraries as part of their overall budgets (and to reduce city appropriations accordingly when State funds go up) removes much of the incentive for the branch library systems to work for additional intergovernmental aid.

Table 2.28

PERCENTAGE OF STATE AID RECEIVED BY NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS UNDER OLD AND NEW FORMULAS

System	Formula	Formula	% Change	% Share of State Population (1970)	% Share of State Population (1980)
Brooklyn	12.02%	11.72%	-2.5%	14.0%	12.7%
Buffalo and Erie	5.35	5.17	-3.4	6.1	5.7
Chautauqua-Cattaraugus	1.59	2.06	+29.6	1.2	1.3
Chemung-South Tier	2.40	2.45	+2.1	1.5	1.6
Clinton-Essex-Frank	1.63	2.00	+22.7	0.8	0.9
Finger Lakes	2.23	2.29	+2.6	1.5	1.7
FourCounty	2.71	2.73	+0.7	2.0	2.1
Mid Hudson	3.23	3.41	+5.5	2.7	3.1
Mid York	2.54	2.49	-2.0	2.2	2.2
Mohawk Valley	2.10	2.13	+1.4	1.6	1.6
Nassau	6.92	6.67	-3.6	7.8	7.5
NYPL	16.65	15.40	-7.5	18.0	16.8
Nioga	2.11	2.15	+1.8	1.8	1.9
North Country	2.80	2.93	+4.6	1.8	1.9
Onondaga County	2.44	2.38	-2.5	2.6	2.6
Pioneer	5.59	5.62	+1.0	5.3	5.5
Queens	9.59	9.34	-2.6	10.8	10.8
Ramapo Catskill	3.22	3.55	+10.0	2.9	8.5
South Adirondack	2.07	2.30	+11.1	1.2	1.5
Suffolk Coop	5.91	6.30	+6.6	6.5	7.3
Upper Hudson	2.48	2.50	+0.8	2.4	2.5
Westchester	4.49	4.39	-2.2	4.9	4.9
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%

Note: New York State population 1970 = 18,358,210
New York State population 1980 = 17,558,072

Sources: New York State Senate Research Service, Issues in Focus #81-143P, p. 7 and Public and Association Library Statistics, 1980.

Table 2.29

SHARES OF FUNDS AND POPULATION UNDER OLD AND NEW FORMULAS, NEW YORK CITY LIBRARY SYSTEMS

	Old Formula			New Formula		
System	Funds Share	Population Share	Ratio (F/P)	Funds Share	Population Share	Ratio (F/P)
NYPL	16.65%	18.0%	0.925	15.40%	16.8	0.917
Brooklyn	12.02	14.0	0.859	11.72	12.7	0.923
Queens	9.59	10.8	0.888	9.34	10.8	0.865
TOTAL	38.26	42.8%	0.894	36.46	40.3%	0.905

Source: See above table.

FEDERAL AID TO LIBRARIES

During the 1978-82 period Federal aid to New York's branch libraries fell significantly from a total of $9.3 million to only $1.2 million. Virtually all of the loss was due to the termination of the CETA public service employment program under which the City was formerly able to provide over $7 million per year for staff support to the library systems. As of fiscal year 1982 the branch libraries received funds under three Federal aid programs, as shown in Table 2.30. All three have suffered cutbacks since 1978 with the Library Services and Construction Act experiencing the largest reduction (down from a total of $1.6 million in 1978).

Table 2.30

FEDERAL AID TO NEW YORK CITY LIBRARIES, FISCAL YEAR 1981-82

	Amount and Sources			
	LSCA	Metro	Title X	Total
Brooklyn Public Library	$179,589	$340,105		$ 514,694
New York Public Library	389,089	--		389,089
Queens Borough Public Library	323,169	--	$22,000	345,169
Total	$886,847	$340,105	$22,000	$1,248,952

Notes: 1. LSCA is the Library Services and Construction Act. LSCA funds are distributed by the state.

2. Brooklyn Public Library is the fiscal agent for the Metropolitan Data-based Project (Metro). Metro is an effort by city and suburban county library systems to develop a common data base for cataloging and processing acquisition.

3. Title X funds are used to employ people over 55 years old.

Source: Library systems.

In light of budgetary trends in Washington, the prospects for increased Federal aid to New York's branch libraries seem dim. Among the steps that could help in this regard would be joint action by the City's legislative representatives and the libraries to support both increases in the LSCA authorization and enactment of the National Library and Information Services Act (a more amply funded replacement of LSCA).

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE

While City funds provide the bulk of library funds, supplemented by State aid and -- to a lesser degree -- Federal aid, the libraries have been able to generate modest additional sums from two other sources. These are fees and fines charged to library users and voluntary contributions.

Fees and Fines

Total income from fees and fines rose by nearly 30% from fiscal 1978 to 1982, as shown in Table 2.31. Further, the total of $1.45 million collected in this way amounts to a meaningful addition to library resources -- more than equivalent to the total Federal aid received in fiscal 1982.

Table 2.31

BRANCH LIBRARY REVENUE FROM FEES AND FINES

	Revenue Received		
	FY 1977-78	FY 1981-82	Increase
Brooklyn Public Library	$ 270,240	$ 377,741	$107,501
New York Public Library	619,000	710,000	91,000
Queens Borough Public Library	228,688	360,125	131,938
Total	$1,117,928	$1,337,866	$329,938

Notes: 1. Revenue sources include fines for late books, charges for lost books, fees for photocopy and other technical services and fees for book and space rental.

2. Revenue sources do not include miscellaneous income from sources such as reserve postals, non-resident cards, lost cards and sales of library publications.

Source: Library systems.

While fees and fines have generally increased in pace with inflation in the three systems as a whole, the rate of gain has been faster in Queens where an automated circulation system was introduced to provide the library with more timely information on overdue materials. The NYPL and Brooklyn libraries have sought funding for similar systems in the expectation that they would be able to recoup at least part of the cost in additional fines (and also reduce the lost book problem).

Voluntary Contributions

Voluntary contributions add modestly to the resources available to the three branch systems. In fiscal 1982 a total of $256,450 was received from contributors (exclusive of NYPL's research libraries which have been major beneficiaries of voluntary contributions). Table 2.32 presents data for fiscal years 1978 and 1982.

Table 2.32

BRANCH LIBRARY REVENUE FROM GIFTS AND DONATIONS

	Revenue Received		
	FY 1977-78	FY 1981-82	Increase
Brooklyn Public Library	$ 4,726	$ 91,635	$ 86,909
New York Public Library	117,000	150,000	33,000
Queens Borough Public Library	3,470	14,815	11,345
Total	$125,196	$2567,450	$131,254

Notes. 1. More than half ($51,071) of the donations received by the Brooklyn Public Library in FY 1981-82 were earmarked for its Business Library.

2. Gifts and donations received by the NYPL Research Libraries are not included in the above figures.

Investment of additional resources in fund raising would be necessary if the library systems are to significantly improve their contributions income. Annual giving programs based on use of mail appeals typically cost as much as they bring in in their first year and even after a good list of givers has been developed the cost can still exceed 25% of receipts (based on a recent Nova study of contributions to United Way agencies in New York City). In light of the growing competition for contributions from many voluntary agencies impacted by Federal funding cutbacks it will not be easy for the branch library systems to improve their results but an effort in this direction appears worthwhile.

Registration Fees

A final potential source of revenue that Nova examined was the introduction of a general fee for borrowers. There are serious legal and political obstacles in the way of such a fee:

- By-laws and articles of incorporation of the library systems would have to be changed.
- The contractual agreement between the City and the libraries would also have to be changed -- and there is a distinct possibility that the terms under which philanthropist Andrew Carnegie financed the construction of a number of branches would prohibit such a charge.
- State aid would be threatened, unless the legislature could be persuaded to relax the terms of existing requirements for free service.
- Action to assure free access to low income persons would also be necessary.

A fee would almost certainly reduce the number of registered borrowers, at least initially. Nova's calculations suggest that an annual registration fee of $10 could produce total annual income of $21.8 million for the branch libraries if all current registrants paid it; on the more likely hypothesis that one-third of currently registered individuals would decline or be unable to pay the fee the annual income would be $14.5 million. If the price paid for an annual fee included the loss of the current level of $12 million in State aid there would be virtually no net gain. On the other hand, if a selective fee (not charged to low income borrowers) were introduced and State aid were not lost the net gain to the library systems could be substantial. Further exploration of the institutional obstacles to an annual fee for library use appears warranted -- if the alternative is a continuation of the serious fiscal pressures now faced by the libraries.

Summing Up: Other Revenues

Of the other sources of revenue available to New York's branch libraries, increases in State and Federal aid appear most desirable -- but neither appears to have good prospects. Fees and fines can be expanded, perhaps to an outside figure of double the current level of $1.4 million per year, through the introduction of automated systems. Voluntary contributions, too, can be expanded but even a doubling of net receipts would only yield half a million dollars a year. A general registration fee on the order of $10 per borrower per year seems to be the best bet to raise substantial sums of money -- but severe legal and political obstacles would have to be overcome before it could be introduced.

MEDICIN
HISTORIAS
DE
ROMANCE
CIENCIA
CIUDAD
AL
ROJO VIVO

2.4 THE BRANCH LIBRARY MISSION, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND BUDGETING PRACTICES

This section addresses three important and related aspects of branch library activities: first, it defines in broad outline the mission of the branch libraries; second, it develops a basis for performance measures that can be used to assess how well the mission is being carried out; and, finally, it examines the overall budgetary relationships between the City and the library systems and suggests some options for change.

In recent years, in the aftermath of its fiscal crisis, New York City has made some noteworthy advances in both its budgeting and performance management practices. Prominent among these advances have been: (1) the installation of an Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) which links a reformed budgeting approach tightly to a vastly improved accounting system; and (2) the development of a broadly-based Management Plan and Report system which defines the mission of City agencies, establishes targets for performance of their overall missions and the objectives into which they are subdivided, and periodically measures progress against these targets. For various reasons, the reasons, the branch libraries have been excluded from both of these management advances. One of the objectives of this phase of the library study project was to look again at the decisions which resulted in exclusion of the branch libraries to see if there are potential advantages to their inclusion, at least in a modified manner. A related objective was to assess the branch library mission to see if it currently includes significant components which -- however desirable in in and of themselves -- might not be appropriate subjects for City financing.

THE BRANCH LIBRARY MISSION

Consultation on Attitudes Toward the Mission

One component of the Library Study Committee's review of the mission of New York City's branch libraries was devoted to consultation with branch library staffs, community boards and elected officials. In part this process involved face-to-face meetings between the consultants and these interested groups, but in light of the enormous scale of the library systems and the many people involved, it was decided that a more effective and comprehensive approach to this consultation process was through a detailed written questionnaire asking for their comments on many different aspects of library operations. Part One of this report (Section 1.3) presents a summary of the responses to the questionnaire survey.

In large measure, the responses to the questionnaire confirm what was already known or suspected by the members of the Library Study Committee and the consultants. Most respondents saw the principal problems of the branch library systems focused in the very limited resources available to the branch systems that, in turn, result in limitations on personnel, materials for loan and in-library use, and hours and days of service to the public. Few respondents supported any

of the options that have been explored by other urban library systems to try to cope with the difficult problems of declining use and shrinking resources which virtually all have experienced. These options include:

- System shrinkage through consolidation of branch operations into a smaller number of facilities so that limited resources can be concentrated. As noted in Section 1.3, while there was a small minority of supporters for this concept, most respondents opposed it.

- Specialization of branch operations so that the services available at the typical branch are limited to one or another age or other user group, with a broader range of services available only at a few regional or central facilities. New York's branch systems, of course, do already practice some degree of specialization, especially for research functions but none has adopted an overt policy along these lines such as has recently been considered -- and rejected in Philadelphia and San Francisco.

- Substitution of different emphases for the current book-based orientation that characterizes most New Yor City branches. There has been some discussion in library literature of introducing advanced technology -- involving computers and telecommunications systems -- into libraries but to date little has become available that promises cost and service improvements in extensive branch library systems. Brooklyn and New York branch librarians, in expressing a desire for technological improvements, want essentially to take advantage of computerized circulation control systems such as that already installed in Queens.

Most of the directions for change in mission or performance favored by survey respondents focused heavily on actions that would enable branch libraries to do what was seen as their basic mission: making available reading opportunities, both on loan and for in-branch use, by residents of three principal age groups (school age youth, working age adults and the elderly). The variations in these aspirations were small and tended to reflect local neighborhood differences more often than they did differences among the three branch systems.

Mission Statement

A draft mission statement for the branch libraries was developed by the consultants and revised after review by the members of the Library Study Committee. This mission statement was developed in a format intended to make it useful in two different ways:

- To provide the three individual library systems with a basis for further work on developing their own individual mission statements which would spell out, in further detail, their priority concerns.

- As a basis for developing performance measures and standards that could be used either in internal library system management improvement approaches or as a basis for inclusion of the libraries in the City-wide Management Plan and Report.

This mission statement is presented below:

Mission Statement for the Public Library System

MISSION

The fundamental mission of New York City's library systems is to assist in individual and community advancement through the efficient and effective delivery of high quality library services. In order to achieve this mission the library systems must address such basic considerations as

- Accessibility of library services to all citizens, including those who belong to various age and educational achievement categories, income classifications, social and ethnic groups and who have other special needs, such as the handicapped.

- Linkages between library services and other related community resources and activities such as the local education system.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Within the overall mission, four distinct goals, each of which has its own objectives, can be identified.

GOAL 1. Education. The library systems seek to serve important public, private and individual education goals. The most significant objectives connected with this goal are:

1.1 Pre-school education opportunities for children and their parents.

1.2 School system support for youth of elementary and secondary school age.

1.3 Adult education support, including support for those enrolled in post-secondary institutions, those engaged in self-education, those who lack basic literacy and those whose native language is not English.

GOAL 2. Information and Cultural Enrichment. The library systems are a key public institution to provide information and opportunities for cultural enrichment. The most significant objectives connected with this goal are:

2.1 Information availability for individuals seeking to expand their knowledge base in general and those who seek specific information to meet their needs.

2.2 Information availability for business and industry and to help support community economic improvement objectives.

2.3 Making available recreation, leisure time and entertainment opportunities.

2.4 Archival functions that preserve and assure access to and transmission of society's knowledge, history and culture.*

2.5 Outreach activities to develop awareness on the part of potential users of resources and opportunities.

GOAL 3. Community Improvement and Enrichment. The library systems are institutions that can assist in the preservation and enhancement of the city's neighborhoods. Significant objectives with respect to this goal are:

3.1 Serving as a community center resource for meetings, programs and activities.

3.2 Serving as a community information resource to provide guidance on the availability of services or activities.

3.3 Constituting a resource to help address the special concerns for identity of the many diverse ethnic, religious, racial and other groups that comprise the city's population.

GOAL 4. System Support. In order for the library systems to meet the external goals described above, they must possess adequate support systems. These include:

4.1 Executive management

4.2 Technical services and systems support

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* Within the more specialized NYPL system, the archival function is primarily the responsibility of the Research Libraries.

4.3 Planning and development to assure appropriate uses of new technology, resource-sharing, etc.

4.4 Maintenance of facilities

4.5 Security of personnel, patrons and facilities

PROGRAMS

In order to achieve the goals and objectives set forth above, the library systems must organize their activities into programs through which services are delivered. Three basic programs can be identified.

Program 1. Central Library* (and related specialized library facilities and services)

Program 2. Branch Libraries

Program 3. System Support Functions

PRIORITY RELATIONSHIPS

There is not a distinct one-to-one relationship between the four goals and the three program categories described above. Some program categories -- especially the central and branch components -- must address several different goals. One way to express this relationship might be through a priority statement such as the following (weighting illustrative only):

	PROGRAM		
GOAL	Central	Branches	Support
Education	1	1	--
Information and Cultural Enrichment	2	2	--
Community Improvement	3	3	--
Support	--	--	1

1 indicates primary priority
2 indicates secondary priority
3 indicates tertiary priority
-- indicates no clear priority relationship

Another approach to priority assignment would be to set them at the more detailed "objectives" level where specific measures might also be assigned.

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* The Queens Borough Library System considers its Central Library as a branch as well as the central facility.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This sub-section suggests types of performance measure that might be utilized in the branch library systems -- either as the basis for a future contractual relationship or, on a more limited basis, to include the library systems within the City's Management Plan system.

On July 1, 1976 a Management Plan and Report system was introduced applying to all Mayoral agencies in New York City. The central element of the system is the regular reporting of actual performance against agreed-upon planned goals for various measures of agency operations. It is this Management Plan System which provides the basic data for the Mayor's Management Plan Report, a Charter-mandated semi-annual report to the people of the New York on the performance of municipal government.

Since its inception, the Management Plan process has been expanded in scope. Non-mayoral "covered" agencies such as the New York City Housing Authority, the Board of Education, the City University and the Health and Hospitals Corporation have been added to the system. One of Nova's tasks in the library consulting project was to suggest some measures of library performance which could lead to the inclusion of the library systems under Management Plan procedures.

The various library systems currently maintain a rich amount of information and library services lend themselves to measures of demand, accomplishment, scheduling and efficiency (though not necessarily effectiveness -- a difficult task in any service system). Data is maintained on circulation, holdings, users, reference inquiries and many other items. Following is Nova's suggestion for a set of uniform performance measures for library services.

Suggested Library Performance Measures

System-Wide Indicators

Financial Resources:

- Expenses (000)
  - Personnel
  - Materials
  - Facilities
- Revenues (000)
  - City
  - State
  - Federal
  - Gifts and Donations
  - Fees and Fines
  - Other

Persons on Staff:

- Full-time Employees
  - * Tax Levy
  - * Other
- Other Employees

(Expressed as Full-time Equivalents)

System Description:

- Population served
- Number of branches
- Land area

Absence Rate (% of Scheduled Hours):

Cost of Paid Overtime (000):

Major Mission Indicators

Full-Time Employees:

Items Circulated:

- Adult Books
- Juvenile Books
- Paperbacks
- Audio-Visuals

Circulation Per Capita:

Circulation Per Service Hour:

Cost Per Item Circulated:

Holdings:

- Adult Books
- Juvenile Books
- Periodicals
- Audio-Visuals

Book Holdings:

- Volumes
- Titles
- Number of Volumes Circulating
- Number of Volumes Non-Circulating

Cost Per Book Purchased:

Total Hours of Public Service:

Hours of Service by Branch:

- More than 40 hours
- Between 30 and 40 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours

Registered Borrowers:

Borrowers Cards Issued:

Active Patrons:*

Registered Borrowers Per Capita:

Cost Per Registered Borrower:

Number of Reserve Requests:

Readers' Inquiries:

- Reference Inquiries
- Directional Inquiries

Number of Special Programs:

Attendance at Special Programs:

Library Attendance:

Support Mission Indicators

Full-Time Employees:

Titles Catalogued:

Items Prepared:

Unit Cost of Book Preparation:

- Original Cataloging
- Other
- In-house
- By Contractor

Registered Borrowers Per security Staff:

Number of security Incidents:

Dollar Value of Lost or Stolen Items:

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* It may only be possible to collect data on the number of active patrons -- registered borrowers who have taken an item from the library -- in Queens which has an automated circulation control system.

Next Steps on Performance Measures

The performance measures recommended above all meet two basic standards: first, they are comparable to measures already included for other City agencies in the Management Plan; second, they all appear to be realistic in that they correspond to data that is or could be maintained by the branch library systems.

The appropriate next steps with respect to these performance measures are:

- Discussions between the branch libraries and the Office of Operations with respect to the desirability and feasibility of including the branch libraries within the Management Plan system.

- Appointment of a joint Operations/Libraries task force to define the initial measures that would be used and to establish plan targets against which progress on each of the measures might be reported.

BUDGETING PRACTICES

At present, city funding of the library systems operates as follows:

- OMB recommends to the Mayor for his Executive Budget decision an overall city funding level (a lump sum) for each of the three systems plus additional amounts covering:

  -- pensions and related fringe benefits to be appropriated in the Miscellaneous budget.

  -- heat, light and power amounts that are appropriated to the Department of General Services.

  -- anticipated State and Federal aid. OMB's decisions have tended to reflect three main factors: first, the prior year funding level; second, what is necessary to meet inflationary pressures; and third, the overall condition of the city's finances.

- Typically, either these amounts or some pro-rated addition or deletion is what is appropriated by the Board and Council in the adopted budget.

Modifying the Lump Sum Approach

At least two changes might be made in the current lump sum approach to address some of its shortcomings. These would involve overall funding levels and performance.

Overall Funding. There appear to be at least two possible ways to address overall funding for library services that could supplement or supplant the current "historic trend plus inflation less PEG" approach:

- Inter-City Comparison. New York City could accept a target for library funding that is equivalent to per capita funding in other comparable cities (say, the next five or ten largest) or in other New York State library systems. Alternatively, the target could be set either higher or lower. However it is set, this would provide a reasonably rational approach to overall funding.

- Fair Shares Comparison. Library funding might be established at some percentage of total funding for comparable city services such as education, cultural affairs and/or parks and recreation. The percentage itself would be arrived at after a review of what the historic City patterns have been.

Performance Measures. If action is taken to include the library systems in the Office of Operations' Management Plan system, as described above, OMB and the library systems would soon begin to have at least a starting point for including some performance objectives in their agreement as to what is to be achieved within the annual lump sum budget appropriation. This move would introduce the potential for modifying the contractual agreement under which the library systems agree to operate the branch libraries and the City agrees to support (substantially all) of their costs. It is likely to take several years to reach a point where relevant and reliable measures could be set for each of the three systems, but a start could be made even with presently available information with the understanding that it was a trial effort subject to review and appraisal each year.

From the city's viewpoint, a performance contract would provide an opportunity to specify overtly what the library systems were expected to provide in the way of services (or at least key indicators of such service). From the library viewpoint such an agreement could also have a number of advantages, such as the following:

- It would give them an opportunity to say what is feasible -- and what isn't -- within the limits of the level of annual appropriations.

- They could make explicit the cost of trade-offs which they are forced to make (or are precluded from making) because of the political environment to which they are subject.

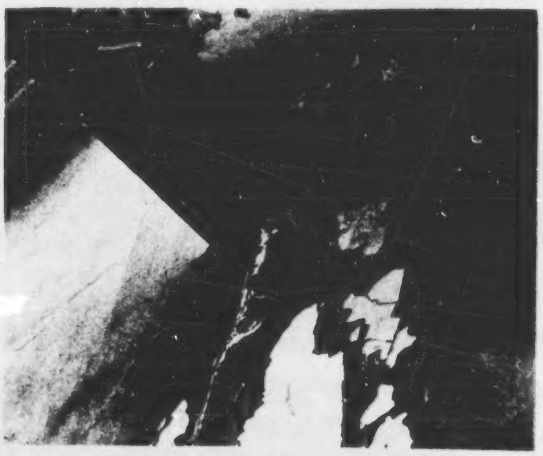
- The libraries would also be able to bargain for a clearly specified appropriation each year -- unlike the present situation in which unilateral City budgetary decisions can impose unanticipated extra cuts on them during the course of the fiscal year. While City fiscal pressures may well preclude the offering of any absolute assurance that no extra "savings" will be imposed, with the of a performance contract the libraries would at least be able to demonstrate how performance is likely to suffer as a result of unanticipated City action.

Summing Up: Mission, Performance and Budgeting

New York City's government as a whole has made major strides in the past decade in improving the quality of its performance management and budgeting systems. Unfortunately, few of these improvements have included the public library systems in their scope. The libraries are not part of either the Management Plan or the Integrated Financial Management System.

The one major administrative change that has been made in the City's budget administration approach to the libraries -- shifting them from a line item to a lump sum budget -- occurred almost inadvertently (as part of IFMS implementation). No subsequent action to take greater advantage of the flexibility offered by the lump sum approach appears to have been taken, either by OMB or the libraries.

This section has presented a preliminary mission statement and performance measures for the branch libraries, items which can constitute a beginning point for including the library systems within the Management Plan. It has also suggested ways in which performance measures could be linked to the annual lump sum appropriation to move further in the desirable direction of a performance contract. These are beginning steps. Follow-up by OMB, the Office of Operations and the branch library system directors will be essential to achieve the administrative improvements that are suggested.



2.5 FURTHER OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

The preceding sections of this part have examined options for change in four major aspects of library system operations. This final section covers an assorted group of additional topics reviewed or discussed by the Library Planning Committee and its consultants during the course of the year-long effort. The initial sub-section is devoted to the issue of market research designed to help the libraries respond better to the needs and concerns of the city's residents and workers. The final sub-section presents some options for change in the City-library relationship that were intended to provoke discussion, rather than as fully worked-out proposals.

POTENTIAL UTILITY OF MARKET RESEARCH

As part of its contract, Nova agreed to undertake a brief analysis of the extent to which various market research methods might assist in better defining actual and potential library users. This section discusses the objectives of market research, reviews various market research methods and comments on the general utility of a market study of the branch library system.

Objectives of Market Research

Marketing theory holds that the key tasks of an organization are to determine the needs and wants of current and potential customers, and to adopt the organization to deliver the desired items. In the absence of a true market test, market research can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service organizations, such as the public libraries, by helping to answer questions such as:

- How does the demand for services compare with supply?
- Are services provided under conditions and at times that satisfy user needs?
- Are customers (users) satisfied with the quality of the service provided?
- Is there a substantial demand for services not currently being provided?

For the three New York City branch library systems there is a need to "re-market" services. The library systems have experienced faltering demand. Library utilization and circulation have been decreasing and there is no strong expectation that demand will increase given the current delivery structure. A market analysis of the branch library systems could measure citizen demand for various library services and examine the relationships between utilization and such factors as:

- library location
- hours of services
- types of services offered
- physical character of the facility
- demographic characteristics

Market Research Methods

Market researchers use three basic techniques to gather information: they are observation, experimentation and survey methods.

When observation is used to gather data, the researcher attempts to learn about the problem by observing relevant individuals. This leads to a more objective picture of overt behavior than can be gained from relying on people's accounts of how they say they behave. However, the observation technique yields no information about the motivations of either those being observed or of non-users.

In experimentation a small-scale controlled experiment is established that simulates the real situation as much as possible. It is expected that the test situation will furnish information and insights which can be translated to the larger environment. The major advantage of experimentation is that it provides a market test for various theories. Its disadvantages are cost, difficulties in selecting control and test market sites with the same characteristics and difficulties in controlling variables other than those being tested.

Survey methods consist of gathering data by interviewing a limited number of people (a sample) selected from a larger group. Surveys can be either small scale "qualitative" research in which individuals or small groups are asked a focused series of questions or large scale "quantitative" studies. Survey methods gather information directly from consumers or other interested parties and attempt to determine both stated behavior and motivation. The disadvantages of survey methods are the opportunities for error in the construction of the questionnaire and in the interviewing process.

Surveys can be conducted by personal interview, telephone or mail.

The personal interview is the most flexible and the most costly survey method. It enables the interviewer to alter questions to fit the situation and to probe more deeply when interesting lines of inquiry are suggested.

The telephone interview is less flexible than the personal interview, but it can be conducted more rapidly and at less cost because a few interviewers can make many calls from a central point. Telephone interviews are more costly than mail surveys, but they have a much higher response rate and enable the interviewer to clarify questions which may puzzle the respondent.

The mail survey sends questionnaires to potential respondents and asks them to return the completed form by mail. The mail survey is economical and helps eliminate both interviewer bias and the tendency of some respondents to answer untruthfully either to avoid embarrassment or to impress the interviewer. A major problem is the low response rate for most mail surveys.

Utility of Market Research

The various New York City library systems have long been involved in marketing their services. They have experimented with their hours and days or service, the mix of materials in their collections and the breadth of activities within their purview in order to improve library usage. Branch librarians regularly report their observations of overt consumer behavior to executive management to help strengthen decision-making.

Other City officials and agencies have also tried various market research methods to assist in increasing library utilization. For example, the Office of the Comptroller conducted a telephone survey of 515 New Yorkers in 1979 to determine their satisfaction with New York City's public libraries.

These survey research efforts have been of mixed utility. Librarians have found that people's stated preference for more evening and weekend hours is often at odds with actual usage patterns. Experiments with increased use of paperback books, on the other hand, have markedly improved circulation in a number of branch libraries. Still other market research findings have never been tested. For example, the Comptroller's finding that half of all adults surveyed would approve of a fee for library cards is hard to test, among other reasons because the annual State aid contribution to the library budget is contingent on the public's free use of the collections. A second recommendation by the Comptroller urging actions to reduce the number of missing library books has been stymied by the lack of funds needed to purchase theft control and automated circulation control systems.

Further market research efforts are already being undertaken as part of the Library Study Project. The Nova Institute has conducted in-depth personal interviews with key library staff members, has observed branch library operations and has sent a mail questionnaire to all branch librarians, community board chairpersons, City Council members and Borough Presidents.

Possible Next Steps

Given the extent of current and previous market research efforts and their modest paybacks to date any future studies must be approached carefully.

One form of market research that has great currency among many professional librarians is the citizen survey. While the Comptroller's Office did do a citizen opinion survey in 1979, its questionnaire was not sufficiently detailed to gather much of the information needed to plan library services. In addition, the Comptroller's survey gathered information only on a city-wide basis.

We believe that the characteristics of the target market for library services vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and that any future citizen survey effort should be aimed at specific branches and their catchment areas. A pilot survey effort might sample populations

within six to ten individual branch service areas. These areas could be selected to represent different ethnic, income, age, density and utilization characteristics.

Such a survey effort would analyze such items as the relationship between library usage and demographic characteristics; indicate preferences among types of services and hours of operation among different groups and determine citizen sentiment on a number of the trade-off issues under consideration by the Library Study Committee.

The expense associated with this effort could be significant. The Fund for the City of New York estimated in a November, 1980, proposal to the Mayor's Office that a similar survey effort would cost between $120,000 and $300,000.

An alternative approach to future market research efforts would be to allocate funds toward a series of demonstration research projects. Among the experiments that could be tried are efforts to increase service hours, consolidate branches, designate special purpose branches and fund branch libraries at resources levels comparable to those in neighboring suburban communities. These small scale efforts could then be evaluated and future system changes based on the results. A drawback to this approach is that it may prove difficult to follow through on successful experiments. In the 1960's and early 1970's a number of experiments of these types were tried in New York's libraries, generally with Federal support. A general difficulty was that even where the experiment led to useful results, it was generally too costly to continue when Federal demonstration funds ran out.

Summing Up: Market Research

Market research is a useful method of adapting service responses to consumer wants. Some market research methods are already in use by New York's libraries. However, the extension of market research methodology appears likely to involve (a) initial costs for surveys and (b) policy issues about the ability to implement findings -- except by trading off established, non-relevant services for others that may be better adapted to user desires.

SOME ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

This sub-section presents some options for possible changes in the branch library systems. Some are intended to save money, some to improve services and some to do both. We've included some that we've heard of from other people and some we've thought up ourselves. All were discussed at working sessions of the Library Study Committee.

Branch Closing Options

1. Mandated closing. Any branch that fails to meet specific utilization standards within a specified time period would be closed. Possible parameters would be based on circulation per

year (say 15 to 20,000 items) and circulation per resident in its service area. The time period for assessment would be one year. In order to assure that no neighborhood is unduly affected, the mandate would apply to no more than one branch in any region per year.

An alternate would be to set a three (or more) year period for branches to meet standards before the mandate applied.

2. Incentives for closing. Any library system that closed a branch would be guaranteed no reduction in its budgeted funds for a period of three subsequent years. Alternatively, the system could be guaranteed an increase in its budget for a three-year period for each branch it closed. (A major problem in making such an agreement would be the difficulty in agreeing on what the budget would have been in the absence of the closing.)

3. Penalty for not closing. First, the city would establish standards for branch redundancy (such as those in the Nova trade-off analysis.) Then, each year that a system maintains such branches in operation, it would be subjected to an additional budget savings requirement for each redundant branch.

4. Voluntary closing experiment. Groups of two or more branches would be encouraged to form voluntary associations under which at least one branch would close. The others would be assured of more hours of service, staff, bookstock and other resources to maintain (or improve) the quality of service to the neighborhood. The experiment would last at least a year, be closely monitored and would be subject to continuation or abandonment in light of pre-determined standards for success or failure.

Alternative Service Options

1. Unstaffed branches. Modest paperback bookstocks would be sited in popular locations such as senior citizen centers, churches or community centers, operated on an "honor" system for withdrawals and returns. Occasional visits would be made by library personnel to resupply and reorder the stock. (These could either be supplements to the existing branch system to try to increase total utilization or could be sited in neighborhoods where existing branches were closed.)

2. Tiered system. All three systems would be required to establish two or three-tiered branch structures in which the lowest tier would be a neighborhood limited-service branch open only one day per week while the highest tier would be a full-service branch. An alternative would be the Lowell Martin approach to youth-serving local branches and a limited number of adult-serving regional centers.

Experiments and Incentives

1. "Magnet" facilities. Each system would be given specific authorization and financing to establish high quality, "suburban-standard" branches -- or perhaps a regional group -- to demonstrate the level of user interest and response that could be achieved. Among the special facilities might be computer training, videotape/videotex and other technological innovations, as well as expanded hours and resources.

2. Volunteer programs. Systems would be encouraged to expand services through use of volunteers who help to extend hours or expand activities. One way to offer an incentive would be to set up a pool or extra-service funds that had to be matched by expanded volunteer hours.

3. Matching grant programs. In order to attract private individual or corporate grants to branches, the City might offer to match (on a one-to-one or other basis) private grants to the branch systems. These offers could either be made on a general basis or for specific programs or projects.

Budget Restructuring

1. Contract for service. Instead of the current system where the City provides a lump sum to each branch system (plus funds to DGS to provide heat, light and power) the City could shift to a performance measurement approach under which it specified the library services it wanted and asked the libraries for cost proposals. Alternative levels of service might be specified, with different cost levels requested from the library systems.

   Specifications might be framed in terms of branch-hours of service (inputs) or in terms of circulation or circulation/branch (outputs).

2. Competitive contracting. Experiments in competitive contracting for groups of branches or community districts -- along the lines of the private options discussed for Sanitation collection service -- could be framed. These could either be done on an intra-system basis where groups of branches combined to propose service delivery approaches or on an open-ended basis where outside organizations were encouraged to submit proposals.

   There are significant complexities in such an approach -- the central/regional/branch library relationships are only one of many issues that would arise.

Summing Up: Options for Change

During discussion of these options by members of the Library Planning Committee, none of these options received support from all participants; many were strongly opposed as undesirable or unrealistic

by various participants. They are included here primarily so that other readers -- interested in possible directions for change or improvement -- can review them as well.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

While there do not appear to be "magical" new technologies that will soon supplant or drastically change the nature of branch library operations, there is one major technological improvement of proven worth that would be of significant utility to New York's libraries: an automated circulation control system.

Working together, the three branch library systems (in the "Tri-Li" grouping) have recently completed a study funded by the Office of Management and Budget to determine the feasibility of implementing such a system. The report concludes that two commercially developed and supported systems exist that meet the majority of Tri-Li's requirements. Either can be implemented in approximately five years with a capital expenditure of less than $9 million. The study presented a detailed implementation plan and budget.

The benefits to be derived from such a system include:

- Markedly improved security for the circulating collections with no appreciable increase in operating costs. Loss of material can conservatively be reduced by $2,650,000/year.
- Access to the collective holding of all the branches of the three libraries can be provided to patrons using even the smallest neighborhood branch.
- The labor-intensity of a number of circulation control and reserve book activities can be reduced, a particularly urgent concern in a period of retrenchment.
- Detailed, reliable management information regarding collection usage would be provided.

All three of New York City's library systems have supported the automated circulation control system. As of the publication of this report, no final decision on whether to recommend it for inclusion in the City capital budget had been made by OMB.

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal emphasis of this project was the analysis of a number of important concerns affecting New York's branch library systems. The analyses were developed by the consultants in close collaboration with representatives of the key City agencies involved in decision-making with respect to library matters. In addition, this final report presents in detail the principal findings of the analysis so that others -- such as the City's elected officials, community boards and other citizen groups -- can utilize them in arriving at their own conclusions as to the appropriate courses of action to improve library services.

This final part of the report presents the consultant's principal conclusions and recommendations. We do not argue that any reasonable person must inevitably come to the same conclusions upon viewing the analyses presented in the report but we do believe that the intensive opportunity we have had during the course of this project to learn at first hand about branch library system problems, needs and potentials gives us a viable basis for arriving at conclusions and recommendations. In addition, the terms of our contract with the Office of Management and Budget call for us to express our own views while providing as objective a review as we can of critical library issues.

This part is divided into two sections. First, we review the serious difficulties that confront the branch libraries and that both call for change and simultaneously make achievement of change extremely difficult. The final section presents our recommendations for action with respect to the key issues considered in this report.

THE PRESSURES FOR AND AGAINST CHANGE

A number of factors affecting the branch libraries create pressures for change in the structure and operations of the three systems. Primary among these are the continued fiscal pressures on the City budget; the apparent long-term trends operating to reduce the level of utilization of branch libraries in many parts of the city; and the need to adapt library operations to changing technological and economic conditions. At the same time, there are major pressures obstructing change in the branch library systems, including in particular a very strong level of neighborhood commitment to the preservation of branches. Each of these factors is discussed below.

Fiscal Pressures for Change

Since the fiscal crisis, New York's libraries have operated under very difficult fiscal constraints. True, their funding appears to have kept pace with that of comparable City agencies (such as the schools and other cultural institutions). Also, their funding is not out of line with that provided by other large cities to their library systems. But it would require a doubling of New York's library budgets to bring them up to the levels of support provided by the suburban

counties across the city line. In the context of suburban standards, New York City can no longer claim to be giving its citizens access to first-quality branch libraries.

Library system response to difficult fiscal constraints has manifested itself in two primary ways: first, service hours have been reduced in order to get the maximum use out of shrinking staffs while keeping all branches open (and, in a number of instances, even opening new branches); second, nearly all other library functions have been given short shrift as compared to basic staff and security -- resulting in serious cuts and slowdowns in the acquisition of reading and reference materials and in nearly all discretionary program activities.

For the near term, at least, there appear to be few prospects that the fiscal pressures can be alleviated. While New York City has made major progress in improving its basic budgetary condition, national economic trends and their reflection on the local scene indicate that the next few years will continue to be a period of fiscal constraint. Similar pressures at the State and Federal levels offer little prospect of relief in the form of intergovernmental aid. Further, the branch library systems have few feasible opportunities for earning fee income or obtaining substantial amounts of charitable contributions.

The libraries, like other City agencies, appear likely to be forced to bear some share of continuing fiscal stringency, subject only to their ability to adapt imaginatively and in cost-effective ways.

Trends in Utilization

The level of utilization of many branch libraries in the city has declined, as compared to five and ten years ago, much less as compared to the levels of use of forty and fifty years ago. Among the factors that appear to have contributed most to this decline are reduced hours of service and the decline in total city population accompanied by a massive outmigration of middle income residents (who tend to be heavy users of libraries) to the suburbs. Competition from other media -- television, paperback books, etc. -- also has clearly had some impact on library use. For the most part, these are factors which are beyond the ability of the branch library systems to control. At the same time, their ability to respond constructively to their changing environment has been sharply limited by fiscal constraints and other institutional factors.

Despite these limitations, New York's librarians have tried to respond and to adapt their services to changing needs and changing populations. Their efforts have included the introduction of new services (such as literacy programs and job search advice), outreach to the community to offer research support and meeting rooms, adding collections of foreign language materials for new immigrant groups, revising the nature of collections and other approaches. They have also tried to focus service cuts where they would have the least overall impact. Unfortunately, these efforts do not appear to have stemmed the slow tide of declining utilization of the city's libraries.

Changing Economy and Technology

It has become a truism to note that New York -- and, indeed, all of urban America -- is going through a period of massive change in the structure of its economy and in the technology that drives that economy. New York is at the difficult forefront of change in its basic economy from domination by manufacturing to a service-based economy, a shift that has been accompanied by significant revisions in the city's job base and the skills mix required of its population. A major factor in promulgating economic change is the parallel rapid change in technology -- especially computer and communications-related technology.

While it is by no means yet clear what these fundamental directions of change will mean to the nature of the city and the needs of its population, it does seem certain that the future economy of New York will be far more knowledge-based than it was in the past. Libraries, as essential repositories and access points for knowledge, could well come to be even more vital institutions for the city's people than they have been in the past. But thus far few of these opportunities have been grasped by New York's branch libraries. The principal exceptions are focused in a few of the more specialized facilities and a few experimental efforts in interchange of materials. It is ironic that at a time when there is an opportunity for the library to play a more valuable economic role than perhaps ever before in its history, the city's branch libraries are barely able to offer more than a minimal level of traditional basic services.

Neighborhood Identity

To an extraordinary degree, the neighborhoods of New York City appear to value the existence of their branch libraries -- even when they don't take advantage of what is available within them. Initial efforts to reduce the number of branch libraries, made at the height of the fiscal crisis, were fiercely and stubbornly resisted. As soon as the depths of the crisis were past, one of the first steps taken was to open additional branch libraries. Strong community pressures, reflected by the elected members of the City Council and Board of Estimate, brought these actions about -- even at a time when the branch systems as a whole were still suffering under difficult fiscal pressures.

This broadly-based neighborhood support for keeping all branch libraries open has been the major factor in shaping the basic response of the library systems to fiscal pressure, thereby reducing hours of service at virtually all branches. One can agree or disapprove of the outcome but one thing seems to be agreed on by virtually all actors in New York City's political scene: it is very difficult to win agreement to the closing of any existing branch library. By comparison, it has proven more feasible (though never without a struggle) to close redundant schools or health facilities.

Summing Up: The Pressures For and Against Change

The net effect of the pressures within which New York's branch libraries have operated has resulted in a system that operates at a low level of equilibrium. It is a dynamic equilibrium because many of the pressures tend to push for change -- in particular, the fiscal pressures -- while others tend to resist -- especially, the entrenched neighborhood opposition to closing or consolidation of branches. The resulting condition of equilibrium operates at a low level, reflected in limited hours of service, limited bookstocks and other materials, and the limited availability of any innovative services. Breaking this pattern in a positive way will be extremely difficult in the absence of additional resources. It will call for imagination, persistence and involvement of city, library and community forces in achieving a consensus on desirable directions of change.

THE CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are presented in the same order as the subjects of the analytic sections in Part Two of this report. In order, the recommendations concern:

- Trade-offs Between Hours of Service and Number of Branches
- Restructuring the Library Systems
- Funding Changes
- Budgeting and Performance Management
- Other Options for Change

In each case, Nova's conclusions drawn from the analysis are followed by our suggestions for action or, in some cases, no action where we believe none is warranted.

The Trade-off Between Hours of Service and Number of Branches

Roughly one in ten of New York City's branch libraries performs significantly less well than most other branches, measured in terms of level of use, efficiency and effectiveness. Most of these below-par branches are in the NYPL system (15 out of the lowest-rated 20). Many are located close to one another in either the South Bronx or Harlem/East Harlem areas. Nearly all of the twenty lowest-rated branches are located in low-income, minority communities which display the highest need for many municipal services.

Closing these branches, accompanied by transfer of the staff to other nearby locations from which they could serve the same neighborhoods, could save money. Nova's estimate is that the savings would be on the order of $50,000 to $100,000 per branch or an upper limit total of about $2 million per year in the event that all twenty were eliminated (an unlikely outcome if for no other reason than because many are adjacent to one another and closing all would leave sizeable unserved areas). Some part of these savings could, however,

be achieved whle maintaining substantially the same total level of branch-hours of service because of the availability of the transferred staff to provide service at other locations.

In light of the difficult budget condition under which New York City operates, it may seem tempting to some to try to achieve this saving. However, the possible dollar saving -- even apart from any social cost -- should also be seen in perspective: even the upper figure of $2 million per year is only about 3% of the total annual budget of the branch libraries; it is a miniscule fraction of the total City budget; it is about equal to the annual "Financial Plan Savings" imposed on the library systems in each of the past few years as part of the City's Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG). The social cost of trying to achieve this modest level of saving by cutting back on a basic city service in the most impoverished neighborhoods is likely to prove very high.

> Recommendation. On the basis of our analysis, Nova has come to the conclusion that branch libraries should not be closed in order to achieve budgetary savings. To the degree that additional savings must be achieved for overall City reasons, we recommend that these be imposed as generic reductions in the overall lump sum appropriations for the library systems, thus leaving the discretion (and responsibility) for achieving savings to the systems themselves. Under such circumstances it seems likely that the main effect of cuts will be on branch-hours of service and will be felt system-wide rather than in particular neighborhoods.

On the other hand, there is another reason to consider reducing the number of branch libraries in the city, especially in locations -- such as the South Bronx and Harlem/East Harlem -- where many current branches are providing only a minimal level of service. Improved services at the same cost could be offered to these neighborhoods through a smaller number of better-staffed branches that were open more hours and days of the week, that had better collections and that could offer special activities focused on neighborhood needs. Despite the real merits of such an approach, Nova believes that it should be put into effect only if it achieves broad-based support from the affected communities, and is not seen as being imposed to achieve budgetary savings by depriving impoverished neighborhoods of a desired community resource. This means that a joint planning process, involving both library personnel and community residents (perhaps most appropriately represented through their Community Boards), should precede any decisions on which branches, if any, should be consolidated and how a more effective comprehensive library service structure can be put in place.

We believe that the participatory approach suggested above has particular merit for those communities where there are a number of low-performing branches in close proximity to one another. However, we think it should also be considered in other communities because of the chance it offers to get better library service at the same constrained budget level.

Recommendation. Nova suggests that every community in New York City be offered an opportunity to explore the merits of consolidating branch libraries to achieve improved service levels. In our view, the approach could be of particularly great value to the people of the South Bronx and of Harlem, enabling them to upgrade a number of what are now among the least-well patronized branches in the city. But we think that the decision as to whether consolidation should be carried out and how it should be done, should be a joint decision arrived at by the people of the affected communities, the library systems and other concerned city officials.

A key factor in whether any community decides to support branch consolidation, we believe, will be the degree of assurance that they can be given by the Mayor and OMB that they will not thereby suffer the loss of their current share of library resources. Providing such assurance will be complex, but there is a valid foundation for it -- at least for NYPL branches -- in the detailed cost-accounting data base now available.

Restructuring the Library Systems

On the basis of our review, Nova concludes that there are no compelling reasons to change the current organizational pattern or basic relationship between the three library systems and the City. Admittedly, it is not parallel to other municipal organizational patterns, but that fact seems to offer little if any justification to upset a structure that has been found workable for more than eighty years.

The only meaningful arguments that might be made for consolidation are economy and equity. Detailed analysis of the economy issue, made a decade ago, demonstrated few chances for savings through consolidation; we can find no significant reasons why this situation has changed except perhaps to the degree that the computer now makes possible some of the savings without administrative consolidation. Equity can be adequately achieved through alternative means.

Recommendation. No action should be taken to integrate the three branch systems in a single city-wide library system.

As to the alternative of decentralization, we believe that only an equity argument might offer a strong case for division of the New York Public Library's branch system into three separate borough units. In this case, action already taken by NYPL in response to requests by the Board of Estimate appears to have assured fiscal equity of treatment of the three boroughs and no additional gain on this score appears likely through breaking up NYPL's basic structure. Further, three borough-level systems would appear to offer no advantages from the viewpoint of economy.

Recommendation. No action should be taken -- beyond budgetary adjustments that have already been made -- to split the New York Public Library System into three separate branch operations.

But while Nova finds little in favor and much against these "macro" forms of system change, we do believe that there are positive moves that can and should be taken toward further integration of the three library systems. Some of these are already under way and should be strongly supported. They include moves toward interchange of library materials, better communications, and joint development of technological systems. In addition, we believe that one additional step would be highly appropriate.

Recommendation. A new program planning function should be established to serve all three branch library systems. This unit, whose work should be guided by a multi-participant policy group such as made up the Library Study Committee created for this project, should focus on analysis and planning on matters of common interest and concern to the three library systems. Among the useful initial tasks for such a unit could be: improvement of the data base on library utilization, including promulgation of common definitions of measures; undertaking some pilot market research efforts; defining and helping assess pilot projects in improved service delivery; and working out agreed-on relationships between the library and school systems for their related areas of responsibility. A modest City-financed staff, whose work might also be supported by foundation grants, would be a good start toward a form of library integration that would make sense for New York City.

Finally, we find little basis for belief that full-scale integration of the school and public library systems is feasible or desirable. Of more serious concern, we believe, is the very serious state of starvation in the school libraries and the resulting deprivation of New York City's pupils relative to those in the rest of the state.

Sources of Funding

The dominant source of funds for the branch libraries is, and seems certain to continue to be, the city itself. At present, City funds account for over four-fifths of total branch budgets. It was not within the scope of Nova's contract for us to assess the adequacy of the level of city support of the libraries; however, what our comparative analysis shows and what we believe to be relevant to New York's decision-makers are three facts about overall library finances:

- The budgets of the branch libraries appear to have done about as well -- no worse and no better -- in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis as have the budgets of comparable municipal functions such as education and cultural affairs.

- New York City also does about as well in supporting its libraries on a per capita basis as do most other large cities in the nation.

- In sharp contrast, better-off suburbs such as Nassau and Westchester Counties support their libraries at nearly twice the per capita level that New York City provides.

However skilled and dedicated New York's librarians may be they cannot offer services comparable to those available in the suburbs at half the cost per person.

The State of New York is the second significant source of financial support for the branch libraries, providing about 16% of their budgets. State support has weakened in recent years as formula changes have worked (modestly) against the interests of the City's libraries relative to upstate. What is much more unfair is that State support does little to reduce the disparities in local funding for libraries; Nassau and Westchester are treated about the same on a per capita basis as are the city's systems, despite their greater per capita wealth. Unfortunately, prospects for a change in this disparity do not appear good, in light of the recent fate of the Levittown case on school finances in the Court of Appeals and the repeated failure of Governor Carey's efforts to restructure the State's program of aid to education (which suffers from comparable defects to those of library aid). In addition, the State's current fiscal difficulties suggest that little additional support for libraries can be expected from Albany in the near future.

> Recommendation. An early task that might be assigned to the joint branch library planning staff (proposed above) would be to build a strong case for improved equity in the allocation of State library aid. Among other approaches, it should utilize the concept of "municipal overburden" that was well developed in the City's legal briefs in the Levittown case (and that convinced the two lower courts that made decisions in the case).

Federal funds for libraries are miniscule and declining. Prospects do not look good for an early reversal of this situation. The only plausible near-term prospect would be from a new approach to job training and supported work on the part of the Federal government that might offer opportunities comparable to those available to the libraries under the now-defunct CETA program. But this appears highly unlikely at this writing.

Nova believes that there are some prospects for obtaining additional library support from other funding sources such as fees and fines and charitable contributions. However, as spelled out in the preceding part of this report, we do not believe that these can become

more than marginal supplements to the basic reliance of the branch libraries on public funding. Registration fees for library use appear to face too many obstacles to be a realistic source of future library finance.

Budgeting and Performance Management

The lump sum budget approach to library budgeting that the City has adopted gives the libraries a highly desirable degree of flexibility -- although the limitations of their own budget systems (coupled with limited funds, admittedly) have meant that they took little advantage of the freedom the City gave them. Nova's review of the relationships between the libraries and administration of the City's budget suggests to us that some gains to both sides of the relationship could be achieved through relatively modest change in what we see as a basically sound structure. Preservation of the lump sum contract approach but modifying it to include specification of performance measures could give the City a major opportunity to utilize a stronger management approach. To date, however, the failure even to include the libraries in the Management Plan and Report system has meant that this opportunity has not been used.

> Recommendation. The basic lump sum appropriation process now in place should be continued, but the City should require that each of the three library systems develop a modern budget system adequate for its internal use and that can provide timely and accurate reports to the City as well. Ideally, a single uniform system should be developed that can be used by all three systems (although this may be complicated by the Research Libraries relationships of NYPL).
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> Recommendation. The preliminary mission statement and performance measures developed in this project should become the basis for including the three library systems in the Management Plan. This will require a joint effort of the Office of Operations and the libraries.
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> Recommendation. As a reliable and relevant set of performance measures is developed, it should become the basis for the selected inclusion of such measures in the contractual relationship between the City and the libraries. Thus, rather than simply making an annual appropriation to the libraries (and subjecting them to an unplanned set of informal "mandates" on branches to be kept in operation, etc.) the City would enter into a true purchase-of-services contract that specifies both the services to be performed and what will be paid for them.

An alternative to the recommended approach could be to re-integrate the libraries into the main City budget and accounting

structure. Nova sees few real advantages to such an approach for either the City or the libraries.

Other Options for Change

There are two other options for change that we believe should be considered by the City of New York. One would be to conduct a modest series of experiments in the provision of library service; the other is a more far-reaching proposal.

First, as to experiments. It is clear that under current conditions New York City can afford only limited improvements -- if any at all -- in its library services. But it should take the fullest possible advantage of what it can afford to test options for improving service and/or reducing its cost. Experiments might include:

- Establishment of centers of excellence or "magnet" libraries in a few places in the City to show what could be accomplished at a higher funding level -- and to assess what response drastically improved service would receive from potential users of library services.

- Introduction of "reading rooms" or unstaffed library facilities to see if locally-based municipal or voluntary agencies would or could house library services, thus extending access to such immobile groups as the frail elderly at modest cost.

- Computer and communications-equipped facilities to enable New Yorkers to have free access to modern technology. Paris now provides its citizens with free access to personal computers; so, too, do many suburban libraries. These are only some of the possible innovations that America's largest city should -- but doesn't -- offer its citizens.

It will be important not simply to operate such experiments, but to assess them carefully and objectively to see what results they have. Experiments of this type might well attract support from the major corporations and foundations located in the city and who see local libraries as part of the knowledge structure on which the city's future economy will be founded.

Finally, we believe that New Yorkers need to face up to the implications of what a declining library system may mean to the quality of life. The gap between what New York City branches offer their patrons and what is available to the residents of many nearby suburban communities is enormous. A brief visit to a Nassau or Westchester library -- or one in a suburban New Jersey or Connecticut community as well -- will quickly illustrate this gap. The basic reason is money. New York City's libraries may well have set national benchmarks early

in this century but they no longer come close to this standard except in isolated special instances such as the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts or the Library for the Blind (both of which have substantial non-City funding).

One the other hand, the future economy of New York City will almost surely be primarily dependent on the skills and education of the people who live and work here. We no longer have a manufacturing-based economy nor are we about to return to one; what New York offers the nation is a sparkling array of knowledge-based and culture-based services. The theater and the arts world, the media, high finance and esoteric business services rank high among our basic industries.

The municipal "infrastructure" that supports these industries requires more than maintenance and renovation of the city's capital plant. It also requires investment in the schools and colleges, the cultural institutions and the libraries of the city.

That's not a new conclusion. New York City has long led the nation in recognizing the importance of its knowledge and culture-supporting institutions. Our list of "firsts" in this regard is long and honorable. But it is also shrinking. We can no longer afford to provide first-quality services to our citizens in every category. To bring our school system up to top suburban standards would require well over a billion dollars a year -- at a time when the city needs to find about that amount each year just to keep its present level of services from deteriorating.

There is, however, one key city system that is an integral part of our knowledge and culture base that could be brought up to top national standards at a cost of about $50 million a year: the branch libraries. An extra appropriation of this order would double the current library operating budget -- and would get them up to the current per capita funding level of Nassau County's libraries.

The writers of this report are realistic. We know that in the current budget context of New York City the first answer is that there isn't any extra $50 million; there's not even enough to support the present limited library system. We are also aware that if there were an extra $50 million a year there would be many other claimants for the money, and that many of them would be able to present arguments that have strong economic and political merit. But we also think that a very substantial case can be made for the libraries as a community-based cultural and knowledge-producing activity that can help attract and retain middle income families and that can also help train and educate New York's many inmigrants and unskilled residents to become the future labor force that a viable city needs. At a minimum, we think that the city's residents and leaders need to look at the merits of such a proposal, difficult as it might seem in the context of the current fiscal outlook.